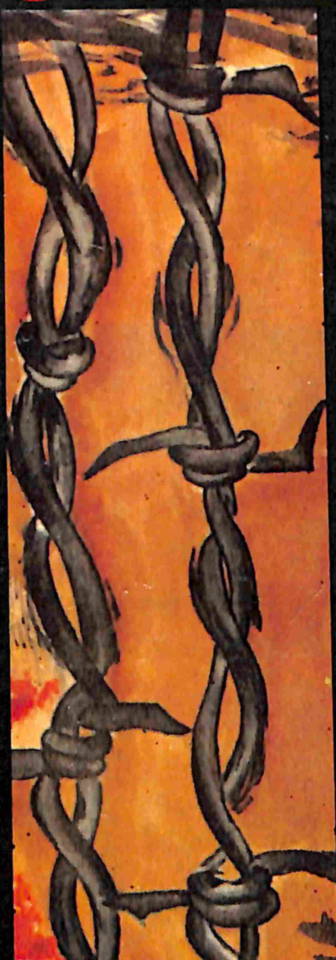
5000 YEARS OF KASHMIR



EDITED BY
BALRAJ PURI

The urge for identity as a basic human urge has received specific academic recognition in post-modern political thought. While technological advances, knowledge explosion, development and democracy have given a new thrust to this urge, people have sought a sense of belonging and security in groups throughout human history.

There are special geographical, historic, ethnic and other reasons which make Kashmiri identity the most persistent and dominating urge of the people of Kashmir Valley. the most crucial part of what is officially called the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Kashmir is the largest valley in the lap of the largest mountains in the world." It is geographically isolated but is internally well-connected and most homogeneous region of the State. Its fabled beauty further inspires a sense of pride among its people.

Kashmir is a unique civilisational experiment with 5000 years of historical continuity. It has been a melting pot of ideas and races. It received every new creed with discrimination and enriched it with its own contribution, without throwing away its earlier acquisitions.

Pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic in its origin, Kashmir joined the Vedic society"with distinctive characteristics of its own life" It added Mahayana content to Buddism when it adopted the new faith. After conversion to Islam, it retained many of its pre-Islamic practices and beliefs. It accepted new ideas, but, after making them part of its tradition. Similarly all admixures of races who emigrated to Kashmir from time to time merged their identities into one whole so that "all non-Kashmir traces are completely absent from their life."

The contributions to this book, study the process of evolution of Kashmiri civilisation, culture, ideas, races and communities. They also provide a vital clue to the understanding of the contemporary Kashmiri mind and society.

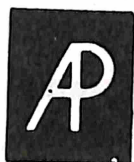
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Edited with an Introduction

BALRAJ PURI



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Editor's Note

This volume is mainly based on the papers read at a seminar organised by the Institute of Jammu and Kashmir Affairs titled *5000 Years of Kashmir* at Srinagar on 22, 23 and 24 September 1989. It was perhaps the most representative intellectual gathering ever held in Kashmir which was attended by over 100 leading Kashmiri scholars, social scientists, writers, cultural and literary personalities.

The idea of the seminar was conceived much earlier. But the preparations took so much time that it coincided with the onset of militancy in Kashmir. That, however, did not affect the uninhibited, frank and cordial nature of the discussions. The seminar, which was the last public activity of the Valley, discussed topics that touched the emotional chord of every Kashmiri and was thus relevant even at that time.

Due to many reasons, including distractions of the subsequent developments, it took a long time to put the papers together. A few papers have been added to fill some gaps. But whatever has happened since then has merely underlined the vitality of Kashmiri identity.

Post-modern thought has recognised the urge for identity and the urge for freedom as the most basic human urges. The process of modernisation–involving explosion of knowledge and information, politicisation, development and communication revolution-- has sharpened this urge everywhere. The ethnic upsurge in the subcontinent and other parts of the world and collapse of the Soviet bloc and Soviet Union are evidence of the same urge. In the case of Kashmir, identity consciousness is much sharper and older, being a 5000-year-old continuous living civilisation.

The political causes of the current turmoil in Kashmir are not discussed at any length in the present study which ends at 1947. But political behaviour of Kashmiris– over 94 per cent of whom are Muslims– in 1947 and since then to the present times can hardly be understood without adequate knowledge of the historical forces that moulded the Kashmiri mind, which also establishes the contemporary relevance of this volume.

Kashmirology is already a developed and a live discipline to which many scholars have made and are continuing to make competent contributions. But the 1989 Seminar attempted to provide a common forum and a common perspective to contemporary scholars of various shades to present an integrated view of Kashmir's past.

It is a past that has not been interpreted, as is customary, in terms of stories of kings and rise and fall of ruling dynasties. It attempts to contribute its mite to the study of a process of evolution of a civilisation, of currents and cross currents of ideas, faiths and cultures, of races and communities merging into a melting pot and a consensual society that was Kashmir. It provides vital clues to understanding Kashmiri society and personality that have emerged out of trials and tribulations of five millennia and are facing fresh challenges.

1

Kashir and Koshur[1] or Kashmir and the Kashmiri

G.M.D. Sufi

Many a writer has attempted to describe Kashmir, some even at length, yet Kashmir still defies description. "The praises of Kashmir cannot be contained within the narrow limits of language," said Abu'l Fazl.[2] And so says Hafiz Jallandhri

(Portraying the picture is like drawing[3] a stream of milk by Farhad for his beloved Shirin from the Mount Bisutun). Kashmir, verily an emerald of verdure enclosed in a radiant amphitheatre of virgin snow, is such a beautiful country, blested with a fertile soil, glorious climate, grand mountains, fine rivers and lovely lakes, and with such charming flowers and delicious fruits, singing birds and sweet odours, that it "once enjoyed a great fame as the seat of the original paradise of the human race."[4] It is, therefore, significant to learn from Dr. Terra that Kashmir and the adjoining plains contain all the essential data for a study of early man in Southern Asia.[5] And it is from Kashmir that the first evidence of a Himalayan Ice Age has been forthcoming.[6] Even though Kashmir may not be the original Paradise, it is certainly regarded as one of the most blessed spots upon the earth. In fact, it forms an isolated world by itself wherein one is linked to think each

spot the most beautiful of all perhaps because each, in some particular respect, excels the rest. The country with which Kashmir is apt to be compared, says Sir Francis Younghusband,[7] is Switzerland.

Varied Attractions

To put it in other words, "to the holiday-maker Kashmir is the chief garden of Asia. For the lover of sport, a wide range of game is available. The botanist and the zoologist have here a great wealth of flora and fauna. The lovely glens and the shaded mountain spurs in their picturesque settings provide an inexhaustible theme to the genius of the poet and a background for the contemplation of the philosopher. For the linguist, Kashmir with its surroundings has a variety of dialects belonging to different branches of the human family. For the geologist, there are numerous monuments of different ages and traces of cultural influences showing the interplay of civilizations. The scholar has an extensive field for research in systems of (Hindu) philosophy peculiar to Kashmir," and for research in Muslim history, culture, poetry and sociology. "The explorer has mysterious lands on the boundaries and the lofty mountains to merit his attention."[8]

From early times the Valley has been divided into two great parts known by their modern names Kamraj and Mararaj. These terms, Sir Aurel Stein says, are derived from the Sanskrit Kramarajya and Madavarajya. Maraj or Maraz comprises the districts on both sides of the Jhelum above Srinagar, and Kamraj or Kamraz those below. Abu'l Fazl also notes likewise. During Muslim rule it appears that Srinagar was the chief city of Maraj and Sopor the headquarters of Kamraj.

Kashmir a Vast Lake

Geological evidence and mythological tradition agree that the Valley of Kashmir was once, perhaps a hundred million years ago, one vast lake hundreds of feet deep. Kashmiri legends say that a Shakti manifestation of Shiva (one of the gods of Hindu Triad) called Sati,[9] appeared in the form of water; this Shakti is also named Parvati and the place, where

it appeared, came to be known as Satisaras, the place where Shakti Sati took the shape of a tarn or lake.

The legend runs that Kashyapa, the grandson of Brahma, found, when he reached Jalandhara (Jallundur) in the Punjab, on a pilgrimage from the south, that all the country to the north-west had been laid waste by a rakshas a (demon) Jalodbhava (water-born), who lived in the immense Satisaras. Distressed at the havoc caused by Jalodbhava and his imps, Kashyap devoted himself to religious exercise, in consequence of which the Hindu Triad, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, appeared to aid him. They found that Indra (the thunder god) and other gods had attempted to annihilate the demons on several previous occasions and had succeeded in destroying not a few, but the majority of the demons had escaped by hiding under water. Vishnu, assuming the form of Varaha (boar), struck the mountains at Varahamula (modern Brahmula) with his tail and cut up the remaining obstacles with his teeth. The waters of the lake rushed out, but the demon took refuge in the low ground, where Srinagar now stands. He baffled pursuit for a time, but was finally caught and crushed to death by the gods. When Jalodbhava was destroyed, the smaller demons lost heart, and the drained basin gradually became inhabited in summer. In winter,however, the people retreated to the drier and warmer regions of the south, leaving Kashmir to the demons. One winter an aged Brahman remained behind, taking up his quarter in a cave. He was seized by the demons and carried off to a place now known as Nila Naga (the lord of Serpents), where he was thrown into the lake. He sank to the bottom, but to his amazement he found it to be really a palace in which the king, Nila Naga (Kashyapa's son), was sitting on his throne. He sought audience of this king and laid a complaint before him of the rough treatment which he had received. The king was most gracious, and gave him *Nilamata Purana* for his guidance, assuring him that if he obeyed the percepts of that book and made the offerings therein prescribed, the demons would cease to molest him. In the spring, he was restored to the dry land. He carried out his instructions and imparted them to others. The result was that, from that time, people

were able to remain in Kashmir during the winter and the demons ceased to trouble them.

Geological Evidence

The above story, legendary as it is, corresponds with the results of early geological observations. In prehistoric times, the basin of Kashmir contained a lake much larger than that of today. The sandstone rock at the western corner of the basin, according to these earlier observations, seems to have been rent by some cataclysm followed by attrition; and the lake was drained by the deepening of the Baramula gorge which was the result of the slow process of erosion of water and which must have taken hundreds of years to accomplish. At that period, the climate was so cold, and the winter snows were so heavy and lasted so long, that the country could be inhabited only in summer by nomads who migrated southward in winter. In time, however, the climate became temperate and Kashmir came to be the abode of a permanent and prosperous agricultural community.

The Name Kashmir

The old name Satisaras was replaced by Ka-samira, that may be taken to mean (land from which water (ka) has been drained off by wind (Samira). According to another interpretation Kashmir is a Prakrit compound with its components Kas, meaning a channel and mir, meaning a mountain. Kashmir could thus mean a rock trough. In its configuration, Kashmir is a deep trough (84 X 20 to 25 miles) with rocky walls. This is one theory.

The other theory - that Kashmir or Kashir named by its inhabitants, was so called on account of the settlement of a race of men called Kash[10], who were a semitic tribe and founded what are now called the cities of Kash,[11] Kashan[12] and Kashgar[13]- has yet to be properly investigated. In that case, the origin of the word Kashmir from Kash, the race, and 'ir' a suffix like 'an' 'and' 'ghar' will permit the belief that the Kasia Ragio and the Kasi Montes of Ptolemy, beyond Mount Imaus, were inhabited by this same race of Kash whose

domination at some period probably extended from Kashghar to Kashmir, in both of which they have left their name.

But the fact is that the name Kashmir is ancient and, in the words of Stein[14], linguistic science can furnish no clue to its origin nor even analyse its formation. The earliest Chinese reference to Kashmir is dated 541 AD, which called the valley *Kushih-mi.* The name Kashmir has been used as the sole designation of the country throughout its known history. It has uniformly been applied both by the inhabitants and by foreigners. "We can trace back its continued use through an unbroken chain of documents for more than twenty three centuries while the name itself is undoubtedly far more ancient"[15]. The inhabitants pronounce it as Kashir which, according to Stein, is the direct phonetic derivative of Kashmir with the loss of m. In Kashur or Koshur–the inhabitant of Kashir and the language of Kashir–u replaces i.

Kashmir made known abroad

There is no notice in the accounts of Alexander's expedition which can be shown to imply even, a hearsay knowledge of the Kashmir Valley, says Stein.[16] "The first authentic information concerning Kashmir which appears to have reached Europe," says Boron Hugel,[17] "was through the Portuguese, whose religious zeal prompted them to promulgate Christianity among the natives, for we attach little credit to the tales we are told of their king marching to the relief of Porus, when he was attacked by Alexander the Great although the later Greek authors mention a country they call Kaspatyrus, which would seem to be Kashmir. Setting aside such unsatisfactory accounts, we may repeat that to Europe Kashmir was, in a measure, unknown till the subjects of Portugal first trod its valleys". Jerome Xavier, a Navarese of high birth, is supposed to be the first European who ever had the glory or the courage to penetrate to this remote region. Another of the same family, Francis Xavier," animated with like fervent zeal to diffuse the light of Christian truth throughout the East, had already gained, and not undeservedly, the glorious title of the Apostle of the Indies". Jerome Xavier appeared at the court of Akbar the Great at Agra and accompanied the Emperor to Kashmir.

Xavier's remarks on Kashmir were published in his work, *Hajus de Rebus Japonicis, Indicis,* etc. (Antwerp, 1605).

The next noted traveller who acquainted the West with Kashmir is Francis Bernier, M.D. of the Faculty of Montpellier, southern France. Bernier left France in 1654 when twenty-nine, in his desire to see the world. In 1657 during the reign of Shah Jahan, he came to Surat, after having been to Syria and Egypt, at the very period when Shah Jahan's sons were contending for the Mughal throne, and Aurangzeb ultimately ascended the throne of Delhi. Bernier arrived at Delhi towards the end of 1659. "When in Delhi, as he had accidentally lost his property and was in a helpless condition, he tried to get some employment." Having failed in his attempt, he secured a monthly allowance from the State Charity Fund through the intervention of Danishmand Khan, a noble of Aurangzeb's court. After twelve years' abode in India, Bernier returned to France. He fixed himself at Paris where his travels were published in 1670.

Stone Age in Kashmir

Hitherto it has been held that there was no Stone Age in Kashmir. Recent finds, however, of agricultural implements, a tomahawk, tumuli, standing megaliths and prone monoliths, made after careful search at Pandrethan, Takht-i-Sulaiman, Vendrahom, Rangyil, Naran Nag and Arhom in Kashmir seem to establish the existence of such an Age.[18]

The Aborigines as the First Settlers

The wide prevalence of Naga-worship before and even after the Buddhist period indicates that the first settlers in the Kashmir Valley must have been the people, known as aborigines, who had spread over the whole of India before the advent of the Aryans. Nothing is known as to the stage of civilization these early inhabitants had attained when they entered Kashmir.

Then came the wave of Aryan invasion from the northwest of India, though this is not accepted by scholars like Keith. As in the Punjab and Northern India, they mixed with the aborigi-

nes and formed one people. They must have come in numbers large enough to put their own racial stamp on the people here.

The Jews

The physical and ethnic characteristics which so sharply mark off the Kashmiri from all surrounding races have always struck observant visitors to the Valley, and have led to several conjectures as to their origin. One such strong conjecture connects the Kashmiris with the Jews or rather one of the Hebraic peoples.

The Jewish cast of feature of many of the inhabitants of Kashmir has been noticed by scores of modern travellers. Two leading authorities on Kashmir in recent times, whose profound knowledge of the land and its people can hardly be questioned, namely Sir Walter Lawrence and Sir Francis Younghusband, have admitted the decided 'Jewish' cast of faces among men, women and children. The late Sir Walter Lawrence says[19] that the hooked nose is a prominent feature and prevailing type is distinctly Hebraic. Sir Francis says[20] that "here may be seen fine old patriarchal types, just as we picture to ourselves the Israelitish heroes of old. Some, indeed, say, though I must admit without much authority, that these Kashmiris are of the lost tribes of Israel ..... and certainly, as I have said, there are real Biblical types to be seen everywhere in Kashmir, and especially among the upland villages. Here the Israelitish shepherd tending his flocks and herds may any day be seen." Bernier was hardly less definite. He said[21] "on entering the kingdom after crossing the Pirpanjal mountains, inhabitants in the frontier villages struck me as resembling Jews. Their countenance and manner and that indescribable peculiarity which enables a traveller to distinguish the inhabitants of different nations, all seemed to belong to that ancient people. You are not to ascribe what I say to mere fancy, the Jewish appearance of these villagers having been remarked by our Jesuit Fathers and by several other Europeans, long before I visited Kashmir".

Shah Hamdan, the great saint, visited Kashmir in the fourteenth century AD. He also named the Valley Bagh-I-

Sulaiman or the "Garden of Solomon"[22], seemingly supporting the settlement of Israelites in Kashmir.

Abu Raihan al Biruni (973-1048 AD) accompanied[23] the expedition of Mahmud against Kashmir, probably in 1021 AD, the expedition being unsuccessful on account of the valorous defence by Kashmirians and heavy snowfall. Al-Biruni, however, utilized every opportunity during his long stay at Ghazna and in the Punjab (1017-30) for collecting information on Kashmir. Writing more than a century before Kalhana, about the inhabitants of Kashmir, al-Biruni says[24] : "They are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country, and therefore take always much care to keep a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them. In former times, they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly Jews, but at present do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people." Abul Fazl represses a similar view.[25]

The possibility of 'Jewish' admixture in Afghan blood has been suspected. The researchers of Sir George Grierson prove that the Kashmiri language belongs to the Dardic, and not to the Sanskrit group, though it must be admitted that Sanskrit has considerably influenced the present Kashmiri language. It is now definitely known that Pushtu is a member of the eastern branch of the Iranian family, and that Kashmiri too belongs to the Iranian group, or, to be more precise, to the Indo-Iranian group. Hence, there must be some affinity between Pushtu and Kashmiri. As already noted, the language as spoken in Kashmir is not called Kashmiri by the inhabitants but Koshur and the land, Kashir.

Dr. Jill Cossley Batt and Dr. Irvine Baird, says the *Montreal Gazetto,* refer to meeting people, high up in the Himalayas, within the borders of Tibet, dwelling in caves, retaining characteristics of an ancient civilization, to whom the name of 'Lost Tribe' has been attributed. The lost tribe is believed to be of Chaldean origin. The theories of Batt and Baird are outlined in a book entitled 'The Lost Tribe.' The expedition of

Dr. Batt and Dr. Baird in 1930-31 AD was supported by the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia, Newfoundland, and forty two leading British and American firms. (Extracted from the article on the subject in the *Montreal Gazette,* reproduced in the *Bombay Chronicle,* Bombay, dated December 17, 1933, Page-13)

The Arabs

"The first rush of Arab invasion in the Indus Valley during the eighth century had carried Muhammadan armies at times close enough to the confines of Kashmir." But no permanent conquest was effected even in the Punjab. The notices of Muslim geographers like al-Masudi, al Qazwini, al-Idrisi are restricted to a brief statement only.

The Bambas, living on the right bank of the Jhelum, in Kashmir, however, claim descent from the Banu Umayya[26], a section of whom is stated to have migrated to Badakhshan, stayed there for some generations, and to have come to Kashmir with Dulcha in 1322 AD.

There is, however a strong admixture of the Indo-Aryan type, and the extent of this influence can be guaged from the magnitude of the change wrought on the Kashmiri language by Sanskrit. We have reason to assume that, even in Hindu times, Kashmir was under foreign rule and the reign of those foreign dynasties was accompanied by settlements of immigrants of the same nationality, though it is not likely that these colonies were extensive.

It can, therefore, be maintained that the present population of Kashmir is an admixture of aborignes with slight 'Jewish', large Aryan and some other foreign elements.

FOOTNOTES

1. In the Kashmiri language, an inhabitant of Kashmir is called Koshur, and so also his language.
2. The *Akbar-nama,* English Translation by H. Beveridge, page 828.
3. In the older sense of constructing and directing a ditch or canal from one point to another–Murray's English Dictionary.

4. *The Historians' History of the World*– The *Times*, London, 1907, Vol. II, page-485.

5. *Studies on the Ice Age in India and Associated Human Cultures* by Dr. H. DeTerra and T.T. Paterson, Washington, DC 1939 Page-1.

6. Ibid, Page-I.

7. *Kashmir,* Sir Francis, Younghusband, 1917, page-2.

8, The Annual Administration Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State for 1940-41, combining the views of Vigne, Moorcroft, Elephinstone, and Sir Walter Lawrence, Page-11.

9. Sati was the daughter of Daksa and the spouse of Shiva. She consumed herself in the sacrificial fire in Daksa's sacrifice, as he refused to invite Shiva to take his share of the offerings.

10. See Sir Lucas King's revised edition of the English Translation of *Babur's Memoirs,* Vol. I page LXI. The acceptance of this theory would lead us to discard that which connects Kash with the Khasas of the Himalayan hills, and opens up quite a new field of research. Sir George Grierson has discussed the origin of Khasas in his *Linguistic Survey of India,* Vol. IX, Part-IV, page 2-8. One conjecture is that Kash is the same as the Semitic Sush, Kosh or Kash and not the Aryan-speaking Khasas.

11. Kash is a town in Bukhara district on the trade-route between Samarkand and Balkh. Kash is now called Shahr-i-Sabz or 'Greentown' on account of the fertility of its surroundings. Shahr-i-Sabz is surrounded by hills on the north, east and south. The present town was built at the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

12. Kashan is a town in the small province of Kashan in Iraq-i-Ajam, Iran. It has a population of 30000 and is one of the hottest towns of Iran, lying in a fertile plain, 90 miles NE of Isfahan and 150 miles from Teheran. The province is divided into the two districts of "garm sir" the warm, and "sard sir" the cold. The great quantities of silk stuff from raw material imported from Gilan and copper utensils are manufactured at Kashan and sent to all parts of Iran. Kashan also exports rose water and is the only place in Iran where cobalt can be obtained. Jewellery and carpets are also manufactured. At the foot of the hills, four miles west of the city, are the beautiful gardens of Fin.

13. Kashghar is an important city in the district of Kashgaria in the extreme west of China in the province of Chinese Turkistan. At present, Kasghar consists of two towns, Kubua Shahr, or 'old city built in 1513 AD and Yangi Shahr or 'new city' built in 1838 AD about 5 miles apart and separated by the Kizilsu-Kasghar stands at the meeting place of several important and ancient routes and

thus has considerable strategical commercial and social importance. Culturally it is superior to Yarqand. Kashghar manufactures silks, carpets and jewellery and the population is estimated at 62000.

14. Sir Aurel Stein's English Translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* Vol II page 386.

15. *The Ancient Geography of Kashmir,* pages 61-62.

16. Ibid, Page 8.

17. *Travels* by Baron Charles Hugel, London, 1845, page 4.

18. *The Stone Age in Kashmir* by Dr. G.E.L. Carter ICS

    The collection of stone implements on which Mr Charter has based his Note may be seen in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

    See also Dr. Terra's studies on the *Ice Age in India,* page-2, Dr. Terra began the geologic survey of the Kashmir Valley in 1932 A.D.

19. *The Valley of Kashmir,* Oxford University Press, 1895, page 318.

20. *Kashmir* Ed. 1917, pages 129-30.

21. *Travels* (Smith's Edition), page 430.

22. Beale's *Oriental Biographical Dictionary* Page 238.

23. *The Raj* English Translation by Stein, Vol. 2, page-360.

24. Al Biruni's India-English edition by Dr. Edward C. Sachau Vol. 1 page-206.

25. Abu'l Fazl writes: "The roads of the country are of such a nature that if the ruler get news a few days before of the approach of strangers and seize the passes, it would be difficult, or rather impossible, for an army adorned with thousands of Rustams to get possession of the country". The *Akbamama* (English Translation by Beveridge, 1906, Vol. II page 198) Abu'l Fazl, however, could not be expected to foresee the invention of the aeroplane in our day.

26. *The Impirial Gazetter of India,* (Vol. XV, 1908, edition, page 101).

2

Origins of the Land and People of Kashmir

P.N.K. Bamzai

A remarkable feature of the origin of the land and of the people of Kashmir is the legends in which they are woven. But what is more remarkable is that they stand the modern scientific tests converting the legends into historical facts. I wonder if such a phenomenon is portrayed in any other part of the world.

The Legend

The legends about the origin of the Valley are unanimous in referring to its having been a vast inland lake formed of the waters from the melting ice and snow on the high mountain peaks surrounding it. According to the *Nilamatpurana* which is the oldest record of the legend, the lake was called Satisaras, the lake of Sati. Geological evidence also corroborates the legend that the Valley of Kashmir was originally a lake hundreds of feet higher than the present Valley bottom. The gorge through which the River Jhelum escapes was then blocked up, and the whole Valley filled up with what must have been the most lovely lake in the world.

In the period of the seventh Manu; goes the legend, the demon Jalodbhava ('water-born'), who resided in the lake, caused great distress to all neighbouring regions by his devastations. The Sage Kashyapa, the father of all Nagas, while on his pilgrimage in the north of India, heard of the cause of this

distress from his son, Nila, the king of the Kashmir Nagas. The sage, determined to punish the evil-doer, proceeded to Brahma to implore his and other gods' help for this purpose. His prayer was granted. All the gods by Brahma's command started for the Satisaras and took up their position on the lofty peaks above Kaunsarnag. The demon who was invincible in his own element, refused to come forth from the lake. Vishnu, thereupon, called upon his brother, Balabhadra, to drain the lake which he did by piercing the mountain with his ploughshare. When the lake had dried up, Jalodbhava was attacked by Vishnu and after a fierce combat slain with His war-disc.

Kashyapa then settled the land of Kashmir which had thus been produced. The gods took up their abode in it as well as the Nagas, while the various goddesses adorned the land in the shape of rivers. At first men dwelt in it for only six months in the year owing to a curse of Kashyapa who, angered by the Nagas, had condemned them to dwell for the other six months with the Pishachas. The men thus left the Valley for the six months of winter and returned in Chaitra (March-April) when Pishachas withdrew.

Another version of the legend in Buddhistic form is alluded to by Heun Tsiang. Its main features, as related in the *Nilamatpurana,* live to this day in popular tradition. They are also reproduced in all Muhammadan abstracts of the *Rajatarangini.* From Malik Haider's *Twarikh,* the legend became known to Bernier and has since found its way into almost every account of Kashmir.

Geological Evidence

Drew recognized clearly the true relation between the legend and those physical facts which seem to support the belief that Kashmir was in comparatively late geological times wholly or in great part occupied by a vast lake. "The tradition", he says, "of the natives-- traditions that can be historically traced as having existed for ages-- tend in the direction of the Vale having been occupied by a lake, and these have usually been considered to corroborate the conclusions

drawn from the observed phenomena. Agreeing as I do with the conclusion, I cannot count the traditions as perceptibly strengthening it; I have little doubt that they themselves originated in the same physical evidence that later travellers have examined.

The geological observations upon which modern scientific inquiries have based their belief as to the former existence of a great lake, are the undoubted lacustrine deposits found in the *Karewas* or plateaus in the Valley. These deposits though of no remote date, speaking by a geological standard, are far older than any monuments of man that have yet been discovered.

Prehistoric

Whether man ever saw the lovely Satisaras, is not yet possible to say. Prehistoric explorations in the Valley have revealed the occurrence of the Quaternary Glacial Cycles. The lacustrine deposits called *karewas* are geological formations of the Ice Age. These overlay the terminal moraines of the first glaciation and are comprised of two groups, lower and upper, differentiated by the moraines of the second glaciation. The intervening moraines are geologically similar to the boulder conglomeration of Pothwar region, District Rawalpindi (Pakistan) which contain Pre-Sohan tools. The upper *karewa* beds represent the second inter-glacial age and can be equated with similar deposits in the Sohan valley, which present pebble tools, the products of the early Sohan industry. No palaeolithic tool has, however, been found in the Valley so far, and human occupation in Pleistocene Kashmir is still to be proved.

The Mesolithic or the Proto-Neolithic period appears to be indicated by the findings of De Terra and Paterson in the Jhelum Valley of Kashmir "of great numbers of artificially flaked stones among which were flaked cores reminiscent of palaeolithic technique, but in all these places it was certain that the flakes are associated with pottery-bearing layers of either neolithic or historic date."

Burzuhoma

The neolithic culture is indicated by the discovery of ground and polished stone axes, hoes and pestles and bone implements, at the well known menhir site of Burzuhoma ten miles east of Srinagar. Burzuhoma is famous as one of the two megalithic sites in the extreme north-west of the Indian sub-continent. It has thrown considerable light on the pre- and proto-historic periods in Kashmir.

The findings at this site unearthed by the Archaeological Survey of India who began excavations in 1960, will be discussed later. Here it is important to mention that near about the silt bed, pits have been discovered in section, indicating a settlement of early pit-dwellers whose date has been tentatively fixed at 3000 B.C. This is perhaps the only known find of such settlement in India and indications are that more valuable data will be found when extensive surface diggings are taken up.

Who were these pit-dwellers using stone and bone tools? This is a question to which nobody has as yet hazarded an answer. Much more work is needed before firm conclusions can be reached as regards the date and the historical significance of these neolithic and chalcolithic peoples; even so it will be of value to state the problems and indicate the general direction to which the evidence points.

Central Asian Evidence

Large-scale investigations of archaeological sites in Central Asia and Northern India reveal a certain typographical affinity between their cultures going as far back as the Old Stone Age. The movement of ideas and peoples over Central Asia to Northern India and back can now be traced to Old Stone Age, and does not begin only from the second century B.C. Further, this was a continuous process seen through the major pre- and proto-historic periods.

The Sohan culture of Northern India has established that the original habitat of the Old Stone Age man in India was in the Himalayan foothills – the Shiwalik formations traversed by

the Indus system from the Peshawar valley in Pakistan to the Kangra valley in India.

Similarly excavations in Central Asia have revealed that the original habitat of the Old Stone Age man in that region was in the low ranges of the Pamirs, the Gissar, Babatag and Zarafshan traversed by the Amu and Syr rivers and their tributaries from southern Kazakhistan to Tadjikistan.

Geographically, the two areas are contiguous, a factor that must have facilitated physical and cultural contacts of people in these regions.

Recent researches in both the areas have, in fact, thrown some welcome light in this direction. We are now in a position to visualize not only a parallel and similar development of the Old Stone Age culture in India and Central Asia but also their occasional contacts. What the nature of such contacts was can only emerge in coming years when more work is done. At present our analysis is based upon tool typology alone.

Neolithic Culture

With further human cultural development we find during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods a closer affinity between man living in the two regions. There is clear evidence to this effect available from excavations in Northern India and Central Asia.

The Neolithic period marks the appearance of a momentous change. During the period we find the emergence of effective village farming communities. There are distinct traits of food production, stock raising, grinding of tools and manufacture of pottery.

Later during the Chalcolithic period, we find man engaged in trade following his acquisition of knowledge of metallurgy which entailed securing of raw materials, sale or barter of finished products or surplus food. The self-sufficiency and isolation of Neolithic villages was thus broken and conditions were ripe for the movement of both ideas and people.

Fortunately some remarkable Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites have been excavated at several places in India. These have been designated as Southern, Eastern and Northern Neolithic cultures. Of the three it is the Northern Neolithic culture exemplified by the sequence at Burzuhom near Srinagar in Kashmir which has a distinctive assemblage. This singles it out from the other two Neolithic cultures in India.

After a close study of the objects unearthed at Burzuhom, two phases of occupation have been recognized. In Phase I, the beginning of which is dated to about 2300 B.C., the material culture included (i) coarse grey or black burnished pottery, often with mat impressed bases; (ii) bone tools including awls, needles and harpoons; (iii) packed and ground stone axes; (iv) ring tools. The inhabitants lived in pits dug into the *karewa* soil. In Phase II, which seems to have continued till about 1400 B.C., the pit dwellings gave place to structures built on ground.

Other innovations included the introduction of the potter's wheel. Towards the end of the phase came the knowledge of metallurgy – a single arrowhead of copper and pierced rectangular or semi-lunar knives known as harvesters. To this phase also belong human and animal burials. The absence of stone blade industry throughout the two phases of occupation is significant.

Sinkiang and Central Asia

Neolithic culture sites have been found in Sinkiang and Central Asia. Lou-lan, a site located on the international trade route in the Tarim basin of Chinese Central Asia and a few other sites in the Lop Nor desert have yielded these cultures.

The characteristic traits of the assemblage include the presence of : (i) blades, including fluted cores; (ii) ground stone axes, including perforated ones and adzes, chisels, etc, and (iii) handmade pottery of two varieties, black and grey.

The Neolithic cultures of Central Asia consist of three main cultural complexes, *viz* (i) the Djeitum culture, (ii) the Keltminar culture and (iii) the Gissar culture.

The Djeitum culture with its distribution in south Turkmenia, is characterized by the use of (i) microlithic flint industry, (ii) bone sickle-handles, (iii) bone implements including needle, (iv) stone axes and querns, and (v) handmade pottery, occasionally painted in reddish brown on cream background. The Djeitum culture which is dated 6000 B.C. shows links with the early farming settlements of the Near East.

The Keltminar culture, with its distribution near the Aral Sea, is distinguished by the use of (i) chert microliths, (ii) bone implements, and (iii) handmade pottery, sometimes bearing incised and stamped decoration. It is dated about 3000 B.C.

The Gissar culture, with its distribution in different parts of Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan Republics is marked by the presence of (i) scrapers of chopper-chopping variety, (ii) Microliths including blades and fluted cores, (iii) ground stone axes including the crescent shaped sickle, and (iv) bone implements. This culture is dated about 3000 B.C.

Most of the traits of the Burzuhom sequence, *viz* lunar knives, pit dwellings, perforated celts, are paralleled on sites in Central and Northern China.

It would be seen that the similarity between the assemblages of Northern Neolithic culture of India, exemplified by the Burzuhom sequence and the Neolithic culture in Central Asia – i.e. Central and north China as well as former Soviet Central Asia, would have resulted from the movement of people and culture into the sub-continent from the north, most probably through the passes connecting these areas. In studying the speed of Neolithic culture, the geographical and ecological background and the various stimuli, *e.g.* population pressure, finding fresh ground, etc., have to be taken into consideration.

The Aboriginals of Kashmir

Hence the origin of the Naga and Pishacha legend as given in the *Nilamatapurana* and referred to by Kalhana may be attributed to the stimuli mentioned above. The legend relates to an early periodic movement of tribal people from Central

Asia to the Kashmir Valley. It refers to the occupation of the Valley after the desiccation of the lake Satisaras by the Nagas. It is difficult to identify the Nagas as they are still behind the veil of myth and legend, peeping out at one time as reptile snakes and at another as human beings. It is no surprise that different theories have been put forth by different scholars on their identification.

However, the view is now veering round to their being a tribe, maybe Pre-Aryan, who inhabited the mountain tracts of north-west India particularly Kashmir. Dr. Grierson says: "I am inclined to believe that the Nagas may have been the ancestors of the non-Aryan inhabitants of Hunza-Nagar whose language Burushaski has not been identified as belonging to any known family of speech". However, this opinion of Grierson is not tenable due to the absence of any remains of serpent worship among the people of Hunza-Nagar. For they were probably called Nagas after the serpent deities they worshipped; just like the worshippers of Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, are even now called Vaishnavas, Shaivas and Shaktas.

The most plausible suggestion is that the Nagas were the aboriginal inhabitants of Kashmir before the advent of the Vedic Aryans. The latter fought with them and the Pishachas and pushed them to the south, east and west. However we need not go here into a detailed discussion about this tribe. Suffice it to say that Nagas were the first people to settle in the land brought forth by the desiccation of the Satisaras and jealously guarded it from incursions of the tribes from the north and the south.

But ultimately the Pishachas from Central Asia began to swoop down into the Valley, particularly during the cold season when the Valley was comparatively warm. Described as short-statured and ugly men from the north, they used to return to their homeland with the approach of summer. I would suggest that the Pishachas were the Chalcolithic tribes from Sinkiang who moved towards Kashmir in search of better land and warmer climate. The location of a Menhir site in the Tarim basin on the international trade route to India,

coincides with the site where the well-settled Pishachas of Kashmir fought annually with further Pishachas hordes trying to enter the Valley.

The *Nilamatapurana* mentions that the relations between the Nagas and Pisacas improved with the passing of time. But when there began an influx of Aryans from the Punjab, the situation changed. For the Nagas preferred the Aryans to the Pishachas and with their help they threw them back to the borders of the Valley. Having adopted the Naga rites and rituals at the hands of the Naga Chief, Nila, the Aryans slowly but surely absorbed the tribe into their social fabric.

Now who were these *manavas* mentioned in the *Nilamatapurana* who ultimately dominated over other indigenous tribes. They were, according to Dr Grierson, a part of mainstream of Indo-Aryan migration to the Punjab who broke away while crossing the Hindukush to enter the Valley *via* Dardistan.

In the absence of a better explanation of the presence of Aryans in the Valley, I had to depend on Grierson's theory in my *History of Kashmir.* But since its publication three decades ago, my extensive study and research on this important subject has convinced me that Grierson had erred and the Aryans actually came from the plains of the Punjab. I am presenting my viewpoint in an exhaustive manner in my book on Kashmiri Pandits.

Saraswat Aryans

Briefly speaking the earliest stream of Aryans who entered India, found the banks of the river Saraswati in the Punjab fertile and conducive to easy cultivation, and settled there. The waters of the river spread prosperity all around and the settlers passed centuries there in peace, building well-planned towns and cities to live in. The Aryan society was by and by stratified into classes according to the kind of their work and profession or *vama.* But as ill-luck would have it, the life-giving river changed its course several times and ultimately dried up.

Known as Saraswat Brahmins, Kshatrayas and Vaishas, they left the Punjab in search of equally good if not a better land in the rest of the subcontinent. An enterprising batch went back to the mountains in the north to reside in the Kashmir Valley of whose beauty and salubrious climate they had heard from their forefathers who used to go there during summer but were driven out by the indigenous inhabitants – the Nagas and Pishachas. They sought the protection of Nila, the Lord of Nagas and begged his permission to settle in the Valley permanently as his subjects.

Nila, says the *Nilamatapurana,* promised the requested permission on condition that they conformed to the social usages and the customs of the indigenous people and adopted their social customs and ceremonies. The Saraswats agreed to these conditions when the Naga chief permitted them to reside permanently in the Valley. Many of these customs and ceremonies are even now a part of the social life of Saraswat Brahmins in the Valley.

Other Immigrants

Coming to the historical period we find Asoka settling 5000 Buddhist monks in the Valley and gifting it away to the Sangha to be used for pursuing higher studies and spiritual practices. Several races entered Kashmir later. We have historical evidence to the settlement of immigrants of the Persian, Greek and Turkish descent, the latter coming before and during Kanishka's rule.

When Kashmir was under the influence of Buddhism, hundreds of Bikshus from here went to distant lands to preach the new religion. In return a large number of Buddhist scholars came from Tibet, China and Central Asia, most of whom settled in the Valley permanently.

The ethnography of the regions surrounding the Valley can be traced clearly from the *Rajatarangini.* In the south and west, the adjacent hill regions were occupied by the Khasas. Their settlement extended in a semicircle from Kishtwar to the Jhelum Valley in the West. North of the Jhelum Valley as far as Muzaffarabad we find the Bombas as the neighbours of

Khasas (later Khakhas). The upper Kishenganga valley above the famous shrine of Sarada was peopled by Dards. Megasthenese already knew them in the Upper Indus region.

With the advent of Islam there was an influx of a large number of Sufis and Sayyids. More than 700 of his followers were settled in Kashmir by Shah Hamadan in the 14th century, to be followed by a larger inflow of Sayyids from Central Asia and Persia during and after Timur's invasion of Northern India. Coming as they did from the line of the Prophet they were treated with great respect by the Muhammadan rulers and their subjects. They gained enormous influence and suppressed the people. Ultimately when their oppression became unbearable, the people of Kashmir rose under an efficient and patriotic general, Malik Tazi Bhat, and most of them were thrown out. But still a large chunk of the Sayyid immigrants settled permanently in the Valley.

Hence the purity of race, which has been noted as distinguishing the great mass of the population of Kashmir, may be admitted with a qualification. It is probably due not only to the isolated nature of the Valley, but also to the curious faculty of absorbing foreign elements. Colonies of Mughals, Pathans, Punjabis and Paharis settled within comparatively recent times in the Valley, have been amalgamated with remarkable rapidity through intermarriage and other means.

What is, however, noteworthy is that this synthesis of various cultural elements has in no way resulted in the debasement of the purity of their intelligence, their love of learning and fine arts and above all their deep-seated faith in the brotherhood of man. God bless them.

3

Etymology of Kashmir

Fida M. Hassnain

The Valley of Kashmir is just like a basin of an ancient lake surrounded by mountains. It was Drew who suggested in his, *The Jammu & Kashmir Territories*, that during prehistoric times, the Valley was a lake and its water reached about two thousand feet above the present level of its surface. In this basin we find flat-topped mounds of clay, now known as the *Karewas krewas*. Later geological researches has shown that the *krewas* are the remnants of deposits of this vast lake. Millions of years back, the Valley and many regions around it were struggling under a big sea. With the emergence of the Himalayas, the gorge at Khadanyar got bifurcated and the water started draining out of the lake. Some of the small lakes such as the Dal, the Wullar and the Manasbal are the shrinking remnants of that vast lake. The *krewas* occupy the entire Kashmir Valley and are centres of earliest habitats of the Kashmiris. Archaeologists have discovered the traces of early cultures burried within these *krewas*, in the shape of skeletons and stone tools. Thus Kashmir can claim to have been a repository of earliest neolithic culture.

Geologists tell us about various volcanic transgressions in the north-western Himalayas. They have also found that Kashmir is an active seismic region where earthquakes have been common. Millions of years ago such a huge volcanic eruption in the Baramulla gorge resulted in the outlet of the water from the Valley. This geological fact was later woven into a

mythological tale in the *Nilamatapurana*, compiled probably in the 7th century.

Leaving aside the mythology of the legend, two facts emerge from it: (a) this land has emerged out of the water; (b) Kashyapa permitted the outsiders, Pishachas to live with the aboriginals, the Nagas, in this land: Geological researches have testified to the accuracy of the first fact. The second fact requires further probe.

Neolithic Culture

The neolithic period in the history of Asia is pregnant with far reaching results for civilization. During this period we find new stone tools, stone axes, flakes of advanced type and other hunting tools together with skeletons of animals in the caves. By then, man had discovered fire and he would live in caves. In the beginning, people lived on animal flesh only but later food-gathering communities came into existence. A time came when knowledge of animal-herding and elementary agriculture became known to the people. In Kashmir, very interesting evidence has come to us with the discovery of neolithitic communities at Burzhom, Semthan and Guphakral. At Burzhom, the archaeologists have found, what they term as the "dwelling pits". In fact these pits are a specialised type of cave dwellings, suitable for rough and cold climate of this region. Some holes into the earth are protected by thatched roofs so as to prevent the incoming snow or rain. Burzahom is a big mound of earth on which stand the megaliths denoting traces of habitation. Such megaliths or standing stones are connected with the prehistoric communities who would revere and respect the sun and the moon. In the underground dwellings, which are circular as well as square and rectangular, there used to live prehistoric Kashmiri tribes in about 2375 B.C. In these dwellings, were found a wide range of bone and stone implements, grey and black pottery, skeletons of dogs and humans, hunting tools and beads, needles, knives and spoons. A very interesting find was a stone slab depicting a hunting scene with two suns. This neolithitic culture of five thousand years back is our starting point in human history. Such type of neolithic cultures have been located in

Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus valley and China. As such, our culture has close affinity with the above mentioned cultures. In fact we are part of the culture of the Middle-east. At Hoinar, in Pahalgam in Kashmir, the State archaeology discovered tiles decorated with a rare motif : two animals twining their necks. It is astonishing to see the same motif in the Palette of Nar-mer, preserved in the National Museum at Cairo. Similarly, the motifs of bulls, cows and lions are common in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus valley and Kashmir.

Indus Civilisation

The earliest known neolithic culture has been dated at Jericho and it was from the Middle-east that the first agricultural tribes spread out. However, the first agricultural irrigation system was experimented in Mesopotamia in about 5000 B.C. The Indus civilization was, in fact, a projection of the Sumerian culture. The economy of these people was based on agriculture and was at the same level of development as that of Mesopotamia and Egypt. The destruction of the Indus civilization came about in 15000 B.C. at the hands of the Caucasoids who in the terminology of the language are called the 'Aryans'. The Caucasoid race denotes the people who lived in the Caucasus region extending from the Caspian Sea and the Black sea to the Mediterranean sea. Those of the Caucasoids who settled in the Iran were termed as the Aryans due to their language differentiation. These very Caucasoid Aryans, a new term to avoid confusion, invaded the north-west India and destroyed the Indus civilization. These people had many branches who went westward also. A branch of these people, termed as the Hittites established themselves in Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia. Another important branch of this race, known as the Kassites established themselves in the Babylonia and even ruled it for about six hundred years.

The Kassites

We are deeply interested in the Kassites because of their being a major tribe to have settled in Kashmir and given it its name. The Kassites are known by various names, such as,

Kash, Kush, Kish, Cush, Khasti. The Kassites belonged to the Caucasoid race who made several settlements in Mesopotamia, Iran and Kashmir. Cush or Kush, we know was a son of Ham or the grandson of Noah who founded the branch of the Kush or Cush tribe. This tribe, wherever it went in the food-gathering stage, named its habitation as Kash or Kish. These people named villages, rivers and mountains after their tribe-name. It is for this reason that we find a village known as Kash near Bagdad. In Mesopotamia, they became rulers and founded the Kassite kingdom and they even named the river as Kashan river. When they had entered Iran, they named their village as Kash-mar which exists even today near Nishapur. In the Central Asian region, the Kassites did establish many settlements in Kash-mora, near Merv, Kash near Bokhara, Kashmohra and Kashania near Samarkand.

These Kassites seem to have moved down into Afghanistan and settled at Kash-kar, Kash-hil, Kash-ek and Kashu. While the Hindu-Kush mountains are named after the Kassites, another settlement named Kash-mor exists in the south of this mountain range. The villages and town of Kashan, Kashgar and Kash remind us of these Kassites. However, we are concerned with Kash-tawar and Kashmir. The *Nilamatapurana* speaks about various tribes which have settled in the Valley from time to time. And one of the important tribes is the Khas or Kush people. We already know that the Pishachas were tribes from Kapisa or modern Kafirstan and the Nagas were the dragon worshippers akin to Median Zohak. But the Kaṣh people had an able leader in the person of Kash-yapa, who not only subdued the local people but also allowed them to live in peace with the non-locals. Henceforth, the Valley was named as Kashir and its people were named as Koshur people. This explains our etymology and to this fact, Babar, the founder of the Mughal rule in India, refers in his *Memoirs* (trans. Leyden & Eriskine).

According to him, the Kash tribes were the people who gave a name to Kashmir. When they settled in the basin of the river Chenab, they named it as Kasht-war, which is presently known as Kishtwar. When the same tribes predominated the

basin of the river Jhelum, they named it, Kashmir or Kashir. Our study leads to the following conclusions :

(a) The Kashmiris are the Caucasoids belonging to the branch of the Kassite Aryans.

(b) It was the Kash or Kish tribe of the Kassites who gave a name to the Valley of Kashmir.

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4

Prehistoric Kashmir : Burzuhoma and Gufa Kral

M.L. Saqi

The prehistoric sites of Kashmir are the fountain-head of much of our knowledge about the past and the present of the Valley. These sites push back the history of Kashmiri civilization to seven thousand years and more. They reveal the various phases of Kashmiri culture and establish the evidence of Kashmir's connection with the neighbouring countries and regions.

Burzuhoma is the first stage of settled population in the Valley. It may be a dead entity for historians of the day but it is a living reality in the rural household of the Valley even today. Most of the clay pots excavated from Burzuhoma are in constant use in the day-to-day life of Kashmiri people.

In Kashmir, Burzuhoma is the first site of late stone age, which has come to light. This neolithic site has been divided into four periods of development.

In its first phase, the people of this place used to live in pits. These pits were dug with sharp edged stones or with the help of saw type things, which is revealed from the walls of the pits. The latest pit at the site was 2.74 metres on the top while its width was 4.57 metres at the bottom. The depth of the pit was 3.95 metres. Evidence found at the site points to the fact that the pits were covered with a roof of Bhoj-Patar which was supported by standing poles. During excavation

some scraps of Bhoj-Patar were discovered. The ash, charcoal and potsherds recovered from the pits prove their use as dwelling places.

In the first phase people of this place used handmade baked clay pots. Such pots are still in use. The imprints of mat on some of the pots testify that mats were used then as these are prepared and used now from the same stuff which the people of Burzuhoma made use of.

The imprints of mat on the bottom side of pots have been seen on the pots recovered from Yang Shav in northern China and Saraj Khula in Baluchistan. The similarity of imprints cannot be termed merely accidental. Instead these imprints are a pointer to some connection between these peoples in the distant past. Research has to go a long way to establish the connections and relations.

Remains excavated have shown that the industry of bone tools was at an advanced stage at Burzuhoma. For making tools, the horns of Kashmiri Hangul (stag) were used. It becomes evident that Hangul in Kashmir is as old as the Valley. Researchers are of the opinion that copper and bone arrows had reached this place either from China or were prepared as an imitation of such things from China.

In the second stage, the residents of Burzuhoma were living in mudhouses or houses built with sun-dried bricks. These bricks as the material for construction are prevalent in the current age also. The houses were plastered with ochremud. Such plaster is not difficult to see in the rural and urban areas of the Valley at the fag end of 20th century also. No doubt some changes have occured in its appliances but the stuff and material is the same. Along with Sun-dried bricks, timber, too, was used in construction. During the second stage pits were not used as dwelling places. It is because of this fact that during this period some pits were filled.

Wheel-made pottery of second stage was recovered from the pits. Some tombs of this period were discovered within the range of the populated area; which testifies to the fact that

dead bodies were laid to rest either in the compound or in some rooms of the ground floor. The tombs were plastered with lime. Thus the use of lime as the material of plastering has its roots in the hoary past in the Valley.

Out of the skeletons discovered, four were found in the posture of paying respects. From some of the graves, only bones were recovered. From other graves, bones and skeletons of animals were found. The bones and skeletons recovered are those of dog, wolf and wild goat. It seems that pets were particularly sacrificed and buried with the dead persons.

This phase is followed by the magalithic period in the third phase. This period is marked by the existence of big memorial stones. The peculiarity of this stage is production of red pottery with the mixture of sand in the clay. The use of bone tools was reduced. Some tools of metal recovered belong to the megalithic period of Burzuhoma.

The last stage of the site has some bearing on the historical period and this period is closer to Harwan remains. The stone slabs are prominent specimens of craftsmanship of Burzuhoma culture in this stage. This slab is flat on both the sides. The top side of the slab is broken. The scene of stag-hunting is depicted on the slab. A man has been shown killing the stag with a spear from behind, and another man in front is ready to shoot an arrow. Besides a dog, the Sun in the sky is also depicted. It is also presumed that it is the indication of Sun-worship. There was another slab with a scene but the scene is erased in such a way that it is not discoverable. The last phase of Neolithic culture of Burzuhoma has hardly any similarity with such other sites located in the country. It has resemblances with northern China, Central Asia, Russia, Afghanistan and Iran.

This Stone Age culture is revealing is many ways, though it is yet to be analysed and explained. The remains recovered from the site are no more in Kashmir but are to be found in Calcutta. Another important site is Gufa Kral. It is the most revealing site after Burzuhoma. We come across such things at Gufa Kral which are not existent in the remains of Burzuhoma. Gufa Kral too had been a colony of pit-dwellers.

From the remains of this place the use of bone tools attracts our attention. In all 27 bone tools have come to light which are made from the bones of markhurs, goats and sheep. Three beads of stone too have been found during the excavation. During the first phase of habitation, wild sheep, wild goats, red stags, wolves, markhurs and bears were found in this area. Sheep and goats were tamed. Mostly such animals were hunted on which business thrived. Bones recovered reveal that common animals and goats were bigger in size but sheep were smaller. People used to live by hunting and they had domesticated animals.

The discovery of spindle from the site is itself a marvel of the Age. This find confirms the existence of spinning and weaving in the Valley at a period of time when living naked or covering the body with bark, grass or hides was the order of the day.

During excavations in a particular phase, most of the bones recovered were of those of sheep, which speaks of liking for mutton by the then-dwellers of Gufa Kral. It will not be out of place to recall that Kashmiris still cherish mutton as compared to other kinds of meat. Another important tool recovered is the awl. A wooden bead has also been recovered. The cock too was domesticated. Rice cultivation was started and other cereals were also part of the diet.

The last period of Gufa Kral is connected with historical period. Other important sites include Semthan, Kanial Van etc. The history of Liddar man is another phase of prehistory of Kashmir which precedes Burzuhoma and Gufa Kral.

5

Nilamatapurana

Ved Kumari Ghai

The *Nilamata* is a Kashmiri Purana referred to by Kalhana as a source of the ancient history of Kashmir. Buhler, to whom goes the credit of saving its manuscripts, states on page 41 of his Report, "Its great value lies therein that it is a real mine of information regarding the sacred places of Kashmir and their legends which are required to explain the *Rajatarangini* and that it shows how Kalhana has used his sources"[1]. But, as a matter of fact, the *Nilamata* gives besides the account of sacred places a lot of information about the Kashmiri way of living. The picture of ancient Kasmira presented by its study is not complete and compact, still it is significant for its value which is supplementary to that of the *Rajatarangini*. While the *Rajatarangini* acquaints us with kings, queens and ministers of Kasmira, the *Nilamata* generally speaks of common people in their homes, streets, gardens and temples. The life of the common people, the food and drinks they took, the amusements they resorted to, the currents of religious thoughts they followed and the rites and ceremonies they performed throughout the year are described therein. If the *Rajatarangini* is important from the point of view of the political history of Kasmira, the *Nilamata* is no less important for the cultural history of that part of the country.

Date: Kalhana (12th Century A.D.) refers to it as a work of great antiquity. The absence of the term *avatara* and the use of the term *pradurbhava* for incarnation of gods, non-mention of the Kalki, Krishna's consort Radha and the sacred leaf of

Tulsi, mention of Buddha as an incarnation of Visnu in a spirit of Catholicity and the incorporation of its various verses into the *Brahma Purana* long before the time of Laksmidhara (1104-1154 A.D.) further indicate its early date.[2]

People

About the inhabitants of ancient Kashmir, the *Nilamata* has preserved highly valuable information. The original inhabitants of the Valley were the Nagas, then came the Pishachas and the Manavas. Being the original occupants of Kasmira, the Nagas did not like the introduction of the Pishachas or the Manavas into the Valley but when the selection was to be made between these two they preferred the Manavas to the Pishachas. The other tribes which are described as occupying the neighbouring countries are the Madaras (inhabitants of the modern Sialkot and the surrounding region between the *Iravati* and the *Chandrabhaga*), the Darvas (inhabitants of Darva identified with the districts of Jammu and Billovar), the Abhisaras (the inhabitants of Poonchhi), the Gandharas (inhabitants of Peshawar, Rawalpindi etc.), Juhundaras probably same as Jagudas (inhabitants of Afghanistan), the Sakhas of the Khasa, the Tanganas, the Mandavas, the Antargiris and the Bahirgiris. Indirect mention of the Yavanas is also made in the Naga name Yavanapriya.[3]

Social, Political and Economic Life

Regarding social, economic and political life in Kashmir, the *Nilamata* has brought to light a few interesting points. The Brahmanas, specially those who were "Itihasavidah" and "Kalavidah" were highly honoured but the Sudras too were not considered degraded. The humane treatment meted out to the servants is a pleasant feature of social organisation of Kasmira revealed by the *Nilamata*. The *Nilamata* often includes the servants also in the list of the persons in whose company the householder feasts and enjoys. The artisans like weavers and carpenters etc. commanded so much respect in the society as to exchange gifts with the higher varnas during the Mahimana celebrations. The very fact that the *Nilamata* describes the Sudras as taking part in the coronation cer-

emony of the king indicates that they were not considered debased.

Another relieving feature of the Kashmiri social life as seen in the *Nilamata* is the position of women. Nowhere is she considered the living torch illuminating the way to hell or the devourer of the intellect of men. There is no reference to any veil worn by her and she moves quite freely in the society emulating as it were the free-moving sparkling waters of the springs of her country. In the moonlit night of Kaumudi Mahotsava we find her sitting beside the sacred fire in the company of her husband, children, servants and husband's friends, although it is not clear as to whether she is merely a silent spectator or she takes active part in the musical and dramatic performances given during this night. She is present at the common feast which takes place on the next day, not only in the festivals celebrated at home but also in the outdoor festivals, she is seen enjoying herself. The peasant's wife is lucky enough to participate in the joyous festival celebrated in the refreshing open fields of nature in connection with the ploughing of the fields and sowing of seeds. The *Nilamata* does not deny water-sports to the ladies of Kashmir. The young maidens, it says, "should specially play in waters" during the celebrations of Sravani festival. Playing with menfolk is allowed to women." The joyful ladies It says "dressed in their best attire, perfumed with scents and decorated with ornaments should sport in the company of men on the last day of Mahimana celebrations". The ladies of the home are honoured on various occasions. On the full moon day of Margasirsa, the gift of a pair of red clothes is prescribed for a Brahmana lady, for the sister, for paternal aunt and for the friend's wife. The mention of the presentation of gifts to friend's wife is quite significant as it could have been possible only in a free atmosphere, where a woman was allowed to move freely with no restrictions on her receipts of gifts from her husband's friends.

As regards their place in the religious life, they are not only allowed to accompany their husbands in the performance of various rites and ceremonies but are also enjoined upon to perform singly some rites specially prescribed for

them. The predominance of the goddesses in the religion depicted in the *Nilamata* is another factor pointing to the high status of women. The very land of Kashmir is a mother goddess, a form of Uma. Numerous references are made to courtesans in connection with the description of festival. The use of a simile comparing Kashmir with a temple due to the presence of tender ladies indicate the popularity of the institution of Devadasis or temple dancers.

On the whole, the *Nilamata* offers a pleasant picture of women of Kashmir. As a daughter she was trained in fine arts and was allowed to move freely in the society. By giving her in marriage, the father obtained religious merits. As a wife, she was loved and honoured by her husband, and as a mother, she shone with her sons who revered her highly. A would-be mother could even be installed on the throne on the demise of her sonless husband-king.

This unconventional account of the women of Kashmir is quite different from the account available in other Puranas and so it gives a distinctive character to the *Nilamata*.

Entertaining of guests is another notable feature of the social life of Kashmir depicted in the *Nilamata*. Even the king is enjoined upon to honour the immigrants from all the quarters.

The people were fond of music, dancing, drama and other means of recreation which indicate their general prosperity depending upon agriculture and trade. The general terms used for the musical instruments are Vadya, Vaditra and Vadyabhanda. We find reference to Vinda (The modern hundred stringed Santoor of Kashmir is probably satatantivina or vana referred in the *Taittiriya Samhita*) Venu (flute), sankha, pataha (drum) and muraja. Dances were performed on religious occasions and in social gatherings held in honour of seasonal and agricultural festivals. The word "Preksa" mentioned in the *Nilamata* refers to theatrical performances. The *Nilamata* mentions also a peculiar phrase "Preksadana" literally meaning the gift of a dramatic performance. It seems to have denoted a gift made for the arrangement of a dramatic show. There must have existed some dramatic clubs which

gave such shows on demand and the injuction of "Yathavidhi preksadana" i.e. the gift for the arrangement of a dramatic show made in the proper procedure, may have been made with reference to them.

As regards the art of image-making the *Nilamata* refers to images made of stone, clay, gold, silver, copper, brass, wood, cloth, the wall and the ground. The people are directed to decorate the Chaityas with beautiful paintings on Lord Buddha's birthday. A circular pattern is drawn on the ground on which a Kashmir bridegroom has to stand before entering for his marriage, the house of the bride. This is a direct descendent of *bhumisobha* mentioned in the *Nilamata*.

Of the items of dress, mention may be made of pravarana which seems to be the same as pravara mentioned in the Mahabharata as a cloth offering protection against cold. Kashmiri pheran is most probably derived from Pravarana. Meat seems to have been a popular item of diet. Otherwise there would have been no necessity of prohibiting strongly the eating of meat for five days dedicated to the worship of Visnu. Wine is recommended as a drink on the new snowfall day and Iramanjari Pujana.

In the sphere of political thought, there existed a belief in the divinity of kingship along with the theory that law is superior to the king. It is stated in a verse that the king of Kashmir is a part of Hara and should not be disobeyed. The same verse is quoted by Kalhana with the significant expression "even a wicked one" added to the king. Compared with Bhishma's statement in the *Mahabharat* that a virtuous king is truly a god, this difference of statement of the *Rajatarangini* from that of the *Nilamata*, shows a gradual development of the theory of absolute monarchy. The survival of a few republican elements is also indicated by the terms pradhana and ganamukhya. Concerning religious life it shows not only the other cults adopting the Naga deities but also the bringing of deities of other cults into its fold. Bhava, Mahadeva and Sambhu which are names of Siva, four yugas, Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Aniruddha and Pradyumna, the epic heroes Rama, Lakshmana and Yudhishtira, all appear in the Naga list

of the *Nilamata*. On the whole, *Nilamata* reveals the spirit of compromise and synthesis in the field of religion. The Brahmanic deities, the Nagas,. the Pishachas, Buddha all receive their due share of worship from the inhabitants of Kashmir. The followers of different cults are stated to be free to worship their respective deities but the different deities are described as honouring one another and thus creating an atmosphere in which various cults are unified."[17]

Foot Notes

1. The Nilamata Purana A Cultural & Literary study Vol I. Preface VII
2 Ibid PP 9–15
3 Ibid P46 ff.
4 The Nilamata Purāṇa Vol II. v. 857
5 Ibid. v. 398.
6 Ibid v. 407.
7 Ibid vv. 546–47
8 Ibid v. 741.
9 Ibid vv. 543–44.
10 Ibid vv. 514, 473–474, 682.
11 Ibid vv 845, 858.
12 Ibid. v. 872
13 Taittiriya Samhita VII. 5. 2, 9.
14 The Nilamata Purāṇa Vol II vv 731, 759.
15 Ibid 712–13.
16 Ibid. 845.
17 The Nilamata Purāṇa, A Cultural & Literary study Vol I. PP 178, 188.

6

Trika Shastra - Indigenous Philosophy of Kashmir

Prem Nath Bazaz

Perhaps the most important of the achievements of the ancient Kashmir is the system of thought called Shaivism but better known locally as Trika Shastra (the Threefold Science) or simply Trika (the Triple). Its founder is Vasugupta, a venerable Brahman, who lived in the countryside at the foot of the Mahadeva mountain which overlooks the famous Dal Lake and the Shalimar Garden. He flourished in the eighth century of the Christian era and is said to have initiated hundreds of Kashmiri scholars into the profound mysteries of his Philosophy.

Because of its geographical position as a central place surrounded by lands of different races and nationalities, the Valley of Kashmir has been from times immemorial a meeting ground of various peoples and diverse cultures. Seeds of thought, came from all the four directions and mingled together in the fertile soil, grew into delicate plants bearing fragrant flowers of variegated colour. For over a thousand years, in pre-Muslim period, the Valley was recognised in the Hindu world as a seat of learning, drawing hundred of students from all parts of India as well as from lands now known as Afghanistan and Central Asia for the study of Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy and other subjects. In the third century B.C. Ashoka conquered the Valley and annexed it to his vast empire. He introduced Buddhism among the subjugated

people and with the support of Naga intellectuals succeeded in undermining Brahmanism. Soon the new faith became very popular and the Buddhist philosophy dominated the entire political and social life of the people of Kashmir.

Clash of Religions

However, the ancestral religion could not be uprooted and its memories lingered on during the whole period of Buddhist supermacy. When, with the change of times, staunch adherents of Brahmanism regained power, they tried to revive the old traditions, and re-establish ancient schools of thought. This caused an intellectual upheaval fōllowed by a gigantic clash of two religious philosophies, antagonistic to each other. To resolve the tension and bring back composure of mind, the mighty thinkers of the age exercising their faculty of creative thought, evolved a new philosophy of life; this is Trika, a synthesis of fundamental doctrines of all the Indian philosophies plus the knowledge gained by the Kashmiri thinkers through their own contemplations, observations and experiences.

No philosophy was ever born in the mind of any single individual. Systems of thought have gradually evolved through long centuries in the minds of men belonging to successive generations and at the proper time assumed definite shape. Although the school of Kashmir Shaivism was founded in the eighth century by Vasugupta, traces of the philosophy can be found in the literature produced quite earlier dating back to pre-Christian era. A few imaginative persons have read the cardinal principles of Trika in the cunneiform signs on clay tablets of the Sumerian King-Priests, Gudea. It may or may not be well-founded speculation; but it seems plausible that in remote antiquity, some sages were acquainted with the basic formulations of Trika Shastra. In his work *Shiv Drishti,* Somananda, who lived in second half of the 9th century, narrates in outline the story of Trika. This is the earliest account of its traditional history. He claimed that the philosophy was first formulated twenty generations (or roughly eight hundred years) before him. He has told us of the masterminds who contributed to the evolution of the Trika

thought before it was presented in a concise and accurate form only a hundred years before his own birth.

Cause of Shaivism

Another historian-philosopher Kshemaraja mentions the immediate cause of the founding of Kashmir Shaivism. According to him, there prevailed two mutually conflicting systems of thought in the eighth century in the Valley. One of them led by a Buddhist teacher Naga-Bodhi and his well-disciplined band taught Nihilist doctrines; they had earned the sobriquets like *Nastiknam Pursara* (Front rank leaders of Nihilists) and *Atmeshvara Nirosaka* (Repellers of Atman and Ishvara). Opposed to them were Nareshvar bhedvadina, the adherents of dualistic system, holding man and God eternally different from each other. Kshemaraja says that the dust raised by the recurrent clashes of the zealots in the two schools concealed the monistic mysteries of Shaivism and the danger of its disappearance from the world was real. It was in these circumstances that Vasugupta came forward arraigning both the schools as incomplete and misguided. He propounded *Shiv Sutras*, a compendium in which the tenets of monistic idealism were succinetly adumbrated in a scholarly fashion.

An amusing account has been given by a disciple of Vasugupta about the origin of *Shiv Sutras*. It is said when the great master, perturbed by the blatant assertions of the Nihilists and the Dualists passed restless days and sleepless nights, Shiva taking pity on his devotee appeared to him in a dream and revealed the whereabouts of Shiv Sutras; they were inscribed on a rock near Vasugupta's village. Awakening, the blessed Brahmin lost no time in going to the spot, in copying out the texts and in mastering the principles of the philosophy. The rock known as Shankar pal has been located by modern antiquarians with the help of hoary tradition but the inscription is no more traceable. One wonders if anything in the nature of writing ever existed on the rock.

As the name indicates Trika Shastra deals with three objects namely (a) man, (b) the universe and (c) the principle

that keeps on restoring order, equilibrium and harmony which are disturbed by constant change. Though more or less concerned with all the three, the Trika is particularly interested in man and his personality.

Trika has also been described by certain writers as standing for (a) the subject of experience, (b) the experience; and (c) the object of experience.

Spirit or Matter

In Trika, spirit and matter are not two different things but are fundamentally one in two different forms. Spirit is matter, and matter is no other than the spirit. Matter is not inert as is commonly believed. Being a form of the spirit it is of conscious character; only there exist variations of consciousness of the spirit within it. Differences between what we call living and non-living places of matter are nothing but those of degrees of consciousness. It follows from this process of thinking that life and matter are basically one; either can acquire the other state.

Trika believes in one reality--the unity that pervades the whole universe of animate and inanimate objects. It is defined as Parama Shiva, the universal consciousness which is self-luminous and illuminates all that exists in the universe whether in the living or the non-livng form. Everything emanates from this effulgence and ultimately merges into it. This reality has two aspects, Prakash (light) and Vimarsh (thinking); one is the being and the other awareness of the being. Prakash is what exists and Vimarsh, the awareness of the existence of what exists.

Sankhya Sytem

Of the well-known six systems of Indian thought, it is the Sankhya of Kapila which has comprehensively analysed the personality of man and discovered twenty-five elements composing it. The Trika philosophers have delved deeper, and through close examination and experimentation found eleven new elements raising the number to thirty-seven; they have uncovered previously unknown layers of consciousness and

regions of the subconscious states. What is more, they did not rest with mere discription of the elements, old and new, but having analysed in detail man's physical, psychological, spiritual and moral personality, the gifted expounders of Trika taught the method of knowing the constituent parts of direct experience, that is, by realising them as facts and not mere figments of imagination. From the realm of subjectivity and speculation, they advanced to the province of the Trika Shastra known as Upaya (means of approach) and it is an inalienable part of the great works on the philosophy.

Philosophy of Change

Change is the first law of the universe, declares Trika; body, mind and spirit are subject to alteration from moment to moment, nothing remains static for even an infinitesimal fraction of time. But unaffected by this process is the consciousness of man which is eternal and the one witness of all that is undergoing the ceaseless change. It is described by the Trika as the nuclear core of the Atman. The changeless witness of the changing body, mind and spirit as well as the universe is no other than Shiva and All Powerful Lord who has not one above Him nor any one to second Him. The only reality is Shiva who is unrestricted independence. He has many other attributes like omnipresence and formlessness but independence is very peculiar to him.

The miseries and sufferings of man are caused by his ignorance. He identifies himself with body, mind or spirit or, worse still, with property owned by him. So long as he does this, he cannot be happy nor enjoy the spiritual bliss to which he is otherwise entitled. "Our bondage is due to our ignorance," declares the *Shiva Sutras*. "Though the soul is infinite consciousness, man thinks, 'I am finite', though Independent, he thinks 'I am finite body," observes Kshemendra in his commentary on the *Shiv Sutras*. The soul forgets that the world has existence only in Shiva and that the soul is identical with the Lord. The aim of the Trika Shastra is to awaken man with the knowledge that the Atman, the witness, is no other than Shiva, the All powerful Lord of the universe.

"No Maya" Principle

While synthesising the previous systems of the Indian philosophy, the Kashmiri thinkers sedulously discarded the barren parts represented by negativism, escapism, and unemotionalism of the Upanishadic Vedanta. In Trika there is no Maya, the principle which creates illusory forms. Even the existence of the promoting cause, Karma or a material cause, Prakriti, is not acknowledged. Shiva is absolutely free and creates all that exists under the influence of desire by the mere force of His will. He makes the world appear in Himself though it is not really so; just as the objects appear in the mirror, God is unaffected by objects of His creation as the mirror is by the images reflected in it. (*Indian Philosophy* by Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II Page 732). In Trika, Shiva is represented as the symbol of the external process of destruction and creation. Shiva is Bhairava (Terrible) and also Kala (Time Destroyer), at the same time. He is the deep-rooted instinct Love.

Absolute Monism

The Trika philosophy is characterized by absolute monism, depth of thought and originality. As has been tersely put: "Shiva is the subject, the experience as well as the experienced". (*Spanda Kurika* Page-5). Essentially it is an idealist philosophy unrelenting in its analysis and logic; but it does not shirk realism,the objective reality of the world; it is a fusion of all that is abiding in the Vedanta, the Sankhya, the Vaisheshaka, the Nyaya and the Vinaya of Buddha; it also contains the core of Vaishnava and Shakta teachings especially the gospel of supreme love and all-absorbing devotion for the beloved. But Trika is against vulgarisation of the inner sentiment; it has no use for self-mortification as a way to self-realisation, so common among most Hindu sects. In the words of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Trika Shastra "has penetrated into that living depth of thought where diverse currents of human wisdom unite in a luminous synthesis."

Vast Literature

At one time a vast literature in the shape of books, dissertations, compendiums, monographs and treatises dealing with different branches of Trika Shastra was in circulation in the Valley. The vagaries of time and hands of vandals have, during the past centuries, destroyed a large part of it; but the books which have survived and come down to us fairly represent the ideas and thoughts of the great teachers on the fundamental principles of the philosophy. Kashmir Shaivism has come to the notice of the outside world through the patient and laborious work of the Kashmir Government Research Department. Out of the extant volumes, the Research Department has edited and published no fewer than 56 comprising 64 separate works of different authors. Broadly speaking the literature may be divided into four sections; (a) the Agama Shastra, (b) the Spanda Shastra, (c) the Pratyabhijna Shastra and (d) Tantra Shastra. The knowledge whose origin is shrouded in mystery and is therefore imagined to have emanated from divine source as revelations to deserving seers is called Agama Shastra. Books belonging to this category are generally in the form of discourses between Shiva and Shakti. The Spanda Shastra is the science of the universe as an ever changing phenomenon. Authors of the treatises included in this section subject the ceaseless change to close scrutiny with the purpose of finding out the principles causing the change as well as the laws governing it. But the essence of Trika is contained in the Pratyabhijna Shastra which is also known as Ishwara Pratyabhijna Shastra (Science of recognition of Lord). The voluminous literature on it is devoted to dissemination of knowledge. It endeavours to dispel ignorance of the seeker after Truth; it teaches him to recognise the everlasting, indestructible and immutable consciousness underlying the universe and to identity individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. Thus alone can the goal of human life be attained and liberation from rebirth secured. In course of time many rituals grew around the Trika when it acquired the status of a popular religion. The fourth section Tantra Shastra deals with this aspect. With the decline of Philosophical thought more attention was paid to the rituals;

a large number of books was written in the tenth and eleventh centuries on the topic; some of which are full of absurdities and puerile assumptions.

As already stated, the oldest known treatise on Kashmir Shaivism is *Shiv Sutras*; it is in aphorisms and very tough, not easily comprehensible by ordinary intellects. It belongs to the Agama section and a number of commentaries, annotations and footnotes have been appended to it by thinkers and learned men who followed the founder of the Trika School.

Commentaries

The most eminent disciple of Vasugupta was Kallata Bhatta. He wrote in the beginning of the ninth century two commentaries, *Spanda Karika* and *Spanda Vritti* on the *Shiv Sutras* to make the philosophy less difficult to understand. In his *Shiv Sutras,* Vartikam Bhaskara, who lived a century later, too, commented upon the original text but from a different standpoint and claimed authority for his views having learned them through traditional interpretation as his inheritance. But the most prolific writer on Spanda Shastra was Kshemaraja who annotated *Shiv Sutras* in his Vimarshini, a lucid, clear and scholarly version which had hardly been rivalled by any other commentator on the subject. Kshemaraja is the author of several other books of which important are (1) *Spanda Doha,* (2) *Spanda Nirnaya* and (3) *Pratyabhijna Hridayam.* He also wrote commentaries on two Agama books namely *Vijnona Bhairva* and *Syachhanda Tantram.*

Genius of Somananda

Barely a hundred years after the founding of the Trika School came Somananda, a genius who laid greater emphasis on the Pratyabhijna aspect of the philosophy. For that reason he is acknowledged as the real founder of this school. His dazzling thoughts in *Shiv Drishti* already referred to above have inspired scholars through centuries and provoked not a few to write commentaries on it. He expatiated on these ideas in another book, *Ishvara Pratyabhijna,* of no less merit but with the additional qualification of being in simple language.

The best commentary on *Shiv Drishti* is by the distinguished Utpala who flowered into eminence in the opening years of the tenth century. His two books *Pratyabhijna* and *Stotravali* are given a place of authority on Shaivism. Other important philosophical works by Utpala are (1) *Ajada Pramatr Siddhi* (2) *Ishvara Siddhi* and (3) *Sambanda Siddhi.* Utpala's genius consisted in combining Jnana (knowledge) with Bhakti (devotion) and then utilising them in the path of dedicated service; to him work was worship; he was opposed to the doctrine of idle inactivity, Utpala was fond of likening God-realisation to the recognition of a long-lost friend by meeting him face to face and not by reading or hearing an account of him or even by seeing a photograph of him. The recognition, he used to say, must be direct, clear and vivid.

Abhinava Gupta

In the middle of the tenth Century arose Abhinava Gupta who excelled his predecessors in many respects and topped the list of idealist philosophers in Kashmir. He was a creative thinker, a penetrating commentator and ritualist. His interests were not confined to Trika Shastra but extended to different branches of literature. Besides being the most erudite exponent of the Shaiva Philosophy, he was a literary critic. His well-stocked and rich mind produced books on Dramaturgy, Rhetoric and Philosophy of poetry. He was born between 950-960 A.C. and lived to a ripe old age. He wrote more than thirty books.

Abhinava Gupta's philosophical productions included original work as well as illuminating commentaries on the treatises of the old masters. His monumental book *Tantra Laka* is classed by itself as the encyclopaedia of the monostic idealism of Kashmir. It comprises 5,800 stanzas and is divided into 37 chapters. But it is obtruse, mystical and dry, it taxes one's power of understanding and reasoning. Only scholars with adequate knowledge of different philosophies and rituals are able to grasp the subtle mysteries that the author wants to convey. It appears Abhinava Gupta was aware of the toughness of his work, therefore he took pains to compile a smaller treatise *Tantra Sara* to serve as an introduc-

tion to the bigger and tougher work. He has recommended it for the beginner; it is written in easy words and the ideas are expressed in a simpler form. Another book by Abhinava Gupta is *Parmartha Sara,* an admirable synthesis of Sankhya and Vedanta systems in the light of Trika principles. Among his more known commentaries on Agama Shastras are (1) *Malinivijayottara Tantram* and (2) *Pura Trimshika*. His brilliant commentary on Somananda's *Ishvara Pratyabhijna* called *Vimarshini* is in no way less important than his original works. Some scholars hold that for its value as a book on philosophy it merits greater praise than any other production of the author.

A Set-Back

Abhinava Gupta lived in a village near Magam on road to Gulmarg. It is said that on reaching the venerable age of 80 the philosopher, along with twelve hundred of his chosen disciples, chanting the melodious hymn beginning with the words *Vyaptacharchar* (Pervading the animate and the inanimate), composed by himself in praise of Shiva, entered the Bhairava cave in a mountain adjacent to his birthplace and was never seen again. Since then the hymn has attained great significance and sung in Hindu homes on occasions of religious ceremonies especially on Shivratri, the national festival of the Kashmiri Hindus.

With the passing away of Abhinava Gupta creative thinking in the Valley received a set-back. Perhaps he had set the standard too high; or probably decline of Hindu rule was adversely affecting the cultural growth. Books continued to be written but none of the writers who came after him contributed anything original to the Trika Shastra. Among these later authors mention may be made of Kshemendra. Jayaratha and Yogaraja. The last of the Kashmiris to bend his mental faculty in this direction was Shivopadhyay who wrote a commentary of Vijnana Bhairava in 1775 AC.

7

Buddhism in Kashmir

Ram Nandan Singh

Kashmir is as rich with its scholastic traits as with the gifts of nature from time immemorial. Every major religion has enjoyed its benign hospitality. The history of Buddhism in Kashmir dated back to the third century B.C. The Buddhism was introduced to the Valley in the reign of the great Maurya Emperor Ashoka whose policy of statecraft has become a model and the quintessence of ideal governance. The indigenous Naga tribe found in the new faith an effective way of defying the Brahmanic domination. Some Nagas who met the great Buddhist scholar Nagarjuna at Nalanda invited him to Kashmir where he preached the message of Buddha to the people. It was the first time that Buddhism travelled outside Madhya-desha and got foothold in the Kashmir-Gandhara regions and other territories of India and also abroad under the royal patronage of Emperor Ashoka. The king not only encouraged propagation of Buddhism in Kashmir but also nurtured it by erecting stupas, chaityas and vihars and giving huge donations to the Buddhist Order.

The story of introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir is very fascinating and challenging. The Buddhist accounts as well as Kashmirian chronicles like the *Nilamatapurana, Avadanakalpalata* of Kshemendra and Rajatarangini of Kalhana narrate a vivid encounter of the indigenous tribe called the Naga with the Buddhist monk Majjahantika. The accounts state that the indigenous tribe opposed and rejected the move of Buddhist monk Majjahantika for conversion to

Buddhism. As a result, there was a fierce battle. But after some resitance by the Nanga tribe Majjahantika won them over with the help of his supernatural powers. Thus the Naga tribe, the original inhabitants of Kashmir, accepted Majjahantika as superior to them and got converted into Buddhism. According to the Gilgit manuscripts, the Nagas were the first to accept the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

A Chinese travelogue of the seventh century A.D. called Si-Yu-Ki of Yuvan Chwang states that Majjahantika with the help of his supernatural powers succeeded in converting a large number of people including Nagas who were the inhabitants of Kashmir. They were at the beginning opposing the new message of Gautama Buddha but later on all of them converted into Buddhism.

This description is found in almost all the accounts, like Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Samantapasdika, Mahakarma-Vibhaga and Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India*, with the same tone and tenor. Thus the volumes of literary sources speak about the introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir.

Literary Corroboration

The literary account receives the corroboration of the epigraphical evidence. In 1851, Alexander Cunningham discovered an ancient stupa at Sanchi in which he found an urn containing corporeal relics of Sariputta and Mahamoggallana, the two famous disciples of Gautama Buddha. The reverse of the lid of the urn bears an inscription which states that a monk Majjahantika was sent to the Himalayan regions to propagate Buddhism at the end of the Third Buddhist Council. This inscription is known as the Bhilsa Tope Inscription No. 02. Thus the epigraphical source supports the view that Buddhism was introduced to Kashmir by the Mauryan King Ashoka in the third century B.C. with the help of Buddhist missionary led by a renowned monk.

According to the literary, epigraphical and antiquarian sources, Emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism after the Kalinga war in 261 B.C. As a result, Ashoka slashed the military expenditure and also decided to have lesser standing

army on the one hand and began to take keen interest in Buddhism on the other. Hence he provided a full-fledged royal patronage to Buddhism and donated huge wealth and other material as well as physical support to the Buddhist Order.

The Kashmirian chronicle *Avodanakalpalata* of Kshemendra also refers to the erection of eighty four thousand stupas by Emperor Ashoka in Kashmir as eloquently mentioned in the "Dharamarajikapratishthavadanam" of the *Avodanakalpalata.*

The *Ashokavadana* also states that emperor Ashoka built eighty-four thousand stupas or Dharmarajikas over the corporeal relics of the Buddha in Kashmir. This fact is further supported by the Ceylonese chronicle Mahavamsa which states that Emperor Ashoka constructed eighty-four thousand viharas in Kashmir. The Divyavadana narrates that Ashoka had wished to built eighty-four thousand stupas on the same day and at the same hour to achieve the blessing of Gautama Buddha and also had wished to propogate Buddhism in Kashmir.

Here it seems that the number of "eighty-four thousand" stupas, chattyas and viharas may be a symbolical figure. Nevertheless it is beyond doubt that the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka got a number of stupas, chaityas and Viharas built in Kashmir.

In the post-Mauryan rule also, Kashmir has given and provided congenial and compatible surroundings for the development of Buddhism. The *Nilamatapurana* of the seventh century A.D., one of the great classical texts of Kashmir, also refers to Buddhism in Kashmir. The text states that the birthday of Gautama Buddha is celebrated with great reverence, honour and enthusiasm.

Yuan Chwang's Travels in India: By Thomas Watters (London, 1904) regards Kashmir as "one of the most important and the most famous lands in the history of the spread and development of Buddhism."

Birth of Mahayana

It was at the fourth Buddhist council held at Harvan, near Srinagar, that the Mahayana school of Buddhism was born. It was presided over by the great Bodhisatva Nagarjuna, who was a poet, philosopher, physician and an author of great fame and who lived at that time at Harvan. Naga Youngmen had met him at Nalanda and impressed by the way he disarmed Brahman scholars in arguments, invited him to Kashmir. According to GMD Sufi (Kashmir, p 62), "on account of his connexions with the Nagas, he received the name of Nagarjun. He became the head of the whole Buddhist church." With Mahayana, Buddhism acquired some typical Kashmiri charateristics, for it incorporated tantrik philosophy and practices of Kashmir.

After Kushan rule, the Gonanda dynasty followed which revived Brahmanism. King Nara, the sixth in line, is said to have burnt down thousands of Viharas (Sufi). Mihirkula, the white Hun and the cruellest of Kashmiri Kings, who seized the throne of Kashmir in 528 A.D., also hated Buddhism. But by this time Buddhism had left a lasting legacy.

A huge corpus of Buddhist literature had been written and compiled. In this regard, the *Vinaya Vibhasha Shastra, Upadesha Vibhasha Shastra, Abhidharma Vibhasha Shastra,* the seven philosophical texts of Sarvastivada, Abhidarmakosha, and so on and so forth may be mentioned.

One of the greatest contributions of the Kashmirian Buddhist scholars is the translation work especially from the Sanskrit works to the Chinese and Tibetan and vice-versa. Mention may be made of Kumarjiva, Dharmatrata, Harivarmana, Skandhila, Sanghabhadra, Vimalamitra, Purna, Bodhila, Ravigupta, Sarvajnanamitra, Dharomottara, Monoratha and others. In the history of Buddhism in China, the names of Kashmirian Buddhist scholars have been written in golden letters.

Spreading Buddhism Abroad

The role of Kashmir in the propogation of Buddhism in India and abroad is also remarkable. In the first century A.D.,

Buddhism travelled to China at the instance of Emperor Kanishka after the conclusion of the fourth Buddhist council held in Kashmir. A large number of Buddhist scholars went out from Kashmir and propagated Buddhism. Thus from Kashmir Buddhism went to Central Asia and from there it travelled to China and finally reached Korea and the far east Japan.

The Buddhists of Kashmir have a niche in the temple of fame all over the world. The history of Buddhism will remember the Buddhist scholars, monks, nuns and laities of Kashmir as long as it remembers the religion of Gautama Buddha.

Kashmir has also propagated Buddhism in Tibet. When the king of Tibet Sen-tsen-gam-po desired to have a script for his newly-founded kingdom, he sent some Tibetan scholars to Kashmir for this purpose in the seventh century A.D. Having learnt the script (which is supposed to be protosharda) they returned to Tibet not only with the newly acquired knowledge of the script but also with the religion of Gautama Buddha.

The contribution of Kashmir to the Buddhist art and architecture is also second to none. The Chinese traveller Yuan-Chwang visited Kashmir in the first half of the seventh century A.D. and found about one hundred Buddhist monasteries, and the other Chinese traveller Wu-kong who visited the Valley a century later noticed more than three hundred monasteries.

Furthermore, a number of ancient Buddhist sites are still extant in Kashmir. The famous Buddhist sites are situated at Parihaspur, Pandrethan, Harwan, Ushkur, Malangpur, Gilgit and so on.

There are three Buddhist monuments, namely a stupa, a chaitya and a monastery called the Raja Mahavihara at Parihaspur. As regards Parihaspur, A.K. Coomaraswamy, a great scholar of Indian art, says: "In the first half of the eighth century A.D., Lalitaditya founded a new capital at Parihaspur, nearly half way between Srinagar and Baramula and raised a series of magnificient Buddhist and Brahmanical temples. The former include a large stupa with double platform, a stairway on each side, and probably indented corners as at Borabudur,

a monastery, temple, seated Buddha figures and two crowned Buddhas or Bodhisattvas in monastic robes."

There are a couple of extremely dilapidated stone stupas and that of a monastery at Pandrethan. The drum of the stupa is embellished with sculptures of which the figures of Padmapani with a rosary in his right hand of about the eighth century A.D. and a standing Buddha in Abhaya-Mudra, and a fragmentary relief depicting the birth of Siddhartha Gautama were found near the stupa.

The Buddhist sites are situated in a couple of terraces at Harwan. In 1925, R.C. Kak excavated a stupa, rectangular courtyard with diaper pebble masonry and a set of cells. A large number of tiles which bear the Kharoshthi numerals have been found. A number of potsherds and the limbs of terracotta human figures and curls pertaining to heads of images of the Buddha have been unearthed. An extremely dilapidated stupa is still extant at Ushkur. Si-Yu-ki of Yuan Chwang mentions that the Chinese traveller spent a night at Ushkur and wrote about a flourishing Buddhist establishment at this place. Similarly, a stupa which has now been reduced to its base is situated at Malangpur.

The Gilgit Buddhist site was found in 1931. There are four stupas having a double basement. Here the world-famous Gilgit Manuscripts were discovered inside the dome of a stupa. There are a number of Buddhist rock-cut caves, stupas and figures of the Buddha around the Gilgit site.

Thus, a number of ancient Buddhist sites are still extant which testify to the presence and the prevalence of Buddhism in Kashmir in the by gone days.

Buddhism's Imprint

Buddhism has disappeared from the soil of Kashmir but not before leaving an indelible imprint on its culture and personality of Kashmiris. The architectural design of most of the Muslim shrines of today bear a close resemblance to Buddhist Pagodas. The way holy relic, enshrined in the most sacred religious place of Kashmiri Muslims namely Hazratbal,

is treated with devotional attachment is also believed to indicate the influence of Buddhist practice of relic worship. The vegetarianism observed by Kashmiri Muslims on sacred occasion of urs of local saints seem to be a part of the Buddhist legacy. According to Sufi, "the extraordinary patience that Kashmir shows under the severest visitations of nature such as cholera and earthquake is clearly traceable to early Buddhist influence". It was Buddhist mysticism which, he adds, paved the way for Islamic Sufism in Kashmir.

8

The Vaak-Shruk Temper of Kashmir

P.N. Pushp

What crystalized into the Vaak-Shruk temper of Kashmir was, in fact, a historical outcome of a lengthy process of interaction, of pragmatic acceptance and thoughtful rejection, of liberal incorporation and realistic assimilations. Such a healthy development was made possible by the circumstance that alongside the orthodox codification of the Shaivite faith there flourished a popular tradition of non-orthodox religion assimilating spiritual discipline at the folk level unfettered by formal scripturism. For the matter of that the basic outlook espoused and sponsored by the Shaivites of Kashmir was that of the Buddhist *Bramanas (Monks)* dedicated to the cause of working "for the good of the largest number". Upanishadic liberalism and Vaisnavite insight that harmonised the two streams into a single onflow.

That is precisely what was symbolised by the Harihara concept of Kashmir sculpture towards the close of the eighth century. The Harihara of Kashmir quite tellingly signifies the essential unity of Godhead and, therefore, of the followers of various paths. The iconographic peculiarities of the ideations (i.e. the three-headed Maheshamurti Shiva and the Four-faced Vishnu), have, herein, merged into a single three faced form artistically balancing the right half of Shiva with the left half of Vishnu. Such a configuration could not have appeared in stone unless it corresponded to some sort of similar cerebra-

tion somewhere around, at least in aspiration, if not in action. That the inspiration for such an ideological unity was widespread in Kashmir is corroborated by the pronouncement of the *Nilamata* that Shiva and Keshava are essentially one, and six hundred years later, Lall Ded echoed the same conviction in a wider range of unified variety.

Kashmir Shaivism

It was such an outlook on unity in diversity that syncretized with the nonsectarian monism of Kashmir's Shiva insight declaring the highest reality as the *Parama Shiva* (the Supreme God). What is now known as Kashmir Shaivism had thus absorbed and assimilated a lot of other traditions, Buddhist as well as Vaishnavite, with strands of esoteric cults like the Sahaja-yana, Vajrayana and Mantrayana. And by the time of Lall Ded (c. 1350), it had become aware of the need to steer clear of all types of divisive ritualism. Abhinava Gupta's emphasis on the socio-spiritual brotherhood of man had blunted the edge of the caste-enthusiasts and Shitikantha's *Mahanya-Prakasha* (C. 1250) had also highlighted an effortless synthesis of the various Siddha disciplines including the Mantrayanis. His *Mahanya* is, in a way, reminiscent of the much earlier attempt at inclusiveness in the form of the Buddhist Mahayana as against the exclusive Hinayana. Shitikantha's outlook was in consonance with the Pratyabhijna emphasis on the recognitive Monistic Theism of Kashmir, driving home the message of unitive consciousness. This very insight later on gave the Kashmiri language the immortal *Vaak* of *Lall Ded* and collaborating with Islamic fervour it illumined the ennobiling *Shruk* of Nund Rishi.

Lall Ded transcended conventional dogmatics of religion and morality, and this gave her the competence to question the misguided insistence on formal (ritualistic) worship (including idol-worship) by appealing to the people's privilege of thinking for themselves:

Why besmear yourself with dust and ashes;
Why not be just as you are.

She indeed had the courage to ridicule the tricks of trade practised by the sinister fake and to unmask the dangerous quacks fattening upon the credulity of unsuspecting followers. This is how she cut them to size:

'Halting the waters, cooling the fire,
Toeing the skyline upside down;
Milking forth a wooden cow;
All this, after all, hypocricy.'

Lall Ded thus raised the misty curtains of obscurantism drawn by cunning pawnbrokers of vested interest in religion as distorted by them. Her plea for restoration of the correct perspective, therefore, is pivotal for her poetic articulation:

Shiva is everywhere the (shining) Sun;
Think not in terms of the Hindu and the Musalman,
Discerning if you are, recognise the Ray in you,
Is right awareness of the Lord.

She had realized the essential oneness of Godhead whether you call it Shiva, Vishnu or Buddha or whatever you will. Accordingly she prayed:

Shiva, Keshava or Jina
or Kamalrajanatha (Brahma) He
May He rid me of the Birth-disease-
Be it He or He or He

Such an ardent quest for spiritual transformation of the individual cutting across inhibiting cults and creeds was, happily, an essential feature of mysticism articulated by Kashmiri verse during the XIV century; and it was this very heritage symbolized by Lall Ded that left a salutary impact upon Nund Rishi (1378-1438), who incorporated the substance of this heritage into the new Rishi order of Kashmir, that he fostered within the Islamic framework of absolute faith in the Prophet and his message.

The period in which Nunda was born, six hundred years back, was seething with unique turmoil political, social, religious and intellectual. Yet it was in this very turmoil that two different traditions of religious culture came face to face in Kashmir, i.e. the indigenous tradition of what had come to be

known as Shaiva Darshana, and the new tradition of Islamic mysticism or Sufism that Muslim saints and divines had brought with them from outside Kashmir, particularly from Central Asian centres of this spiritual lore, areas like Khurasan, Baghdad and Bukhara, the cradle of Iranian sufism. Earlier still these areas had remained a clearing house of Buddhistic culture.

Naturally, therefore, despite the gulf of divergence in creed and cult accentuated by dogmatic insultation, the basic affinities in human aspiration and spiritual endeavour became more and more apparent and brought about a more authentic communication of minds at the level of popular participation. While the Buddhistic idea of *'bahujana-hita:va bahujana-sukha:'* (largest good of the largest number) recognised an echo in the Islamic concern for the *Khair-al Kathir* (sounding like a faithful rendering in the Arabic language) regardless of colour, caste or creed, the concept of *La illah il-allah* (there is no god but God) did not appear to be far removed from that of the *Parama Shiva* visualized by Kashmir Shaivism.

The Islamic notion of *Ludani* (coming direct from God) discovered a close parallel in the indigenous *sahaja* or, even in the *ana:hata*. It was indeed such affinity running through a variety of religious tradition and spiritual quest right from the spread of Buddhism to the advent of Islam that facilitated the growth of what came to be distinguished as the Rishi order of Kashmir.

Yet the Shruk of Nunda Rishi does not betray any wholesale departure from the earlier Rishi tradition which appears to have been of a more elastic nature without insistence on a particular creed other than the intuitive recognition of superconsciousness, the final goal of all mystic endeavour. Nunda's direct vision and deep insight pierced through hypocrisy that used to thrive on dogma. It was, no doubt, the strength of his conviction that stealed him against the vile machinations of the irate orthodoxy spearheaded mostly by those who failed to appreciate the Shaiva strains in his Shruk. Even the diction that came so pat to him must have infuriated his dogmatic adversaries, for much of it was woven out of the

strands peculiar to Kashmir Shaivism, though he put word and phrase to creative use in terms of intrinsic need. His emphasis on inner discipline is just in tune with the bright traditions of Shaivism as well as Sufism that had reached him through saints and divines, and had become relevant to him after passing through the crucible of his personal experience and deep realization.

The crux of Nunda's message is love that makes human brotherhood meaningful by cutting across all distinctions of caste and creed. This very love of one and all around him is, in a way, the mainspring of most of his utterances, often with revealing interrogation addressed not only to others but also to himself as well as the Lord. He asked:

Born of the same parents (these are);
Why estrange them from one another?
Be they Hindus or Muslims.
When will God favour the lowly men?

Like Lall Ded, again, Nunda goes beyond the form to the spirit of what is generally taken for granted as religion. Could such a highly evolved person remain unconcerned while the bigoted enthusiasts encouraged sectarian isolation and fanatic activism? His dig at these distorters of human dignity, therefore, is quite in tune with his solicitude for the simple folk.

It is insights, outlooks and attitudes like these that have conditioned what may be described as the Vaak-Shruk Temper of Kashmir.

9

Kashmiri Shaivism and Sufis

Abbas Rizvi

The *Lalla-Vakyani* or the 'Wise Sayings of Lall Ded or Lalla,[1] had a strong effect on local sufis. A Kashmiri Shaivite, popularly known as Lall Ded, Lall Didi and Ma'i Diddi, Lalla is also known by her Sanskritized names, Lalla Yogishwari or Laleshwari. Her family were Brahmans from Pompur and she appears to have been born sometime in the middle of the fourteenth century. As was the custom of her caste, at an early age Lalla was suitably married to a member of another Brahman caste; however, spurning family life she became a Shaivite yogini.

Lalla began wandering around Kashmir in the typical garb of a mendicant. According to legend she met Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani on several occasions and modern scholars such as R.C. Temple[2] and Muhibbu'l Hasan[3] have mistakenly sought to prove a sufi influence on Lalla's verse composed while in a state of ecstasy. These, however, so strongly express the teachings of Kashmiri Shaivites that such a theory seems implausible. Her themes include such beliefs that the Supreme Reality, identified as Shiva, underlies the Changeless Reality and that He is Eternal and Infinite, All-Pervading and All-Transcending. In His immanent aspect, Shiva is diffused throughout the universe and in his transcendental state He is beyond all universal manifestation. Shakti, as an aspect of Shiva who is both He and She, a unity in duality, and a duality in unity. The manifestation of the universe is 'an expression of Shiva, the highest Reality.' She says:

Ice and snow and water: these be three
That to thy vision separate seem:
But they are one for the eyes that see
By light of the Consciousness Supreme.
What the cold doth part, the sun combines;
What the sun doth part, doth Shiva make whole;

What Shiva doth part, the Supreme confines
In one Shiva and Universe and Soul.

What are thine idols but lumps of stone?
What but stone the temples that are thine?
Venerable Brahman, who alone
Offerings to these to make Divine?
Hold the breaths that in thy body rise,
Meditating on the One alone;
So thou be of understanding wise
And thou know Him to be not of stone.[4]

Rishi Order

The cross fertilization of sufi beliefs with those expressed by Lalla thoughout her verses led to the establishment of the Rishi order of sufis in Kashmir. Its founder was Shaikh Nuru'd-Din Rishi who, according to some authorities, was born on 10 Zu'Ihijja, 779/9 April 1378[5]. Tradition has it that in his childhood Shaikh Nuru'd-Din Rishi received an education in how to be both a robber and a weaver but in both fields he was to prove a poor pupil. Although he was brought up as a Muslim, he did not obtain a formal religious education. Later he admitted that he did many penances to atone for his illiteracy. Performing the usual ascetic exercises of a mystic, the Shaikh lived in a cave in the village of Kulmuh near Srinagar, at the same time totally abstaining from meat and gaining nourishment from wild spinach and leaves.[6] Some Kubrawiyya sources attempt to show that Shaikh Nuru'd-Din was initiated into the order by one of the *khalifas* of Mir Sayyid' Ali Hamadani, while some anachronistically make the Shaikh a disciple of the Mir himself.[7] It would seem, however, that the Shaikh obtained inspiration from Lalla who by that time was well-known to Kashmiris. Serious differences between the

attitude to religion and mysticism of the Kubrawiyya and of Shaikh Nuru'd-Din would make any relationship unlikely. Some early Rishi sources state that the Shaikh was an Uwaisi who obtained initiation directly from the spirit of the Prophet. According to Jonaraja, the Shaikh was the greatest sage of his time.[8] Shaikh Nuru'd-Din died on 26 Ramazan 842/12 March 1439, in the reign of Sultan Zainu'l-'Abidin.[9]

The Shaikh's teachings are embodied in his Kashmiri verse, some of which are almost identical to those written by Lalla. However, there are some verses which are authoritatively attributed to Shaikh Nuru'd-Din. Through them the Shaikh emerges as an ardent devotee of God trying to reach the Unknowable in the heart by lighting the lamp of Love. The 'ulama' distinguished between the spirit and the flesh but the *'arif* (gnostic) emphasized the disparity between the desires of the spirit and those of the flesh. To him the insects and worms in his cave were his companions in the adoration of God. He also believed the lower self should be subdued mercilessly as it was man's greatest enemy. Like all ascetics, he considered *mullas* to be hypocrites who recited the Quran for money and were unconcerned with its message.[10] A true slave of God depended on no one for his survival. To the Shaikh the Islamic profession of faith was incomplete without a valid recognition of the reality of the self.

Shaikh Nuru'd-Din and his disciples preferred to call themselves Rishis not sufis. Of his many disciples. Bamu'd-Din, Zainu'd-Din and Latifu'd-Din were Brahmanas by birth and had become Muslims under the influence of their *pir's* intense spirutualism. The stories of their conversion were like many others concerned with mystic conversions, but all consistently portray Shaikh Nuru'd-Din as a spiritual beacon to Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus alike. Shaikh Zainu'd-Din invented a distinctive dress for Rishis which consisted of a variegated woollen cloak with a black and white pattern running through it.

Among other eminent disciples of Shaikh Nuru'd-Din were Nasru'd-Din and Qiyamu'd-Din, who both had a number of important disciples of their own. A century later, many Rishis also began to live in *khanqahs,* accepting land and money

from the government and their own devotees. Nevertheless they remained dedicated servants of the people, irrespective of class and religious distinctions. The Rishis strongly impressed both Abu'l-Fazl and Emperor Jahangir. Both mention them planting fruit trees for the benefit of the people. Rishi authors believed that member of their order had turned Kashmir into a heaven for the people, although they themselves led harshly austere lives. The contemplative life of the Rishi was founded on the *pas-i-anfas* or *pranayama*. Generally they remained celibate believing that a family was a great impediment to the pursuit of a saintly life. Shaikh Nuru'd-Din admitted that although meat-eating was permitted by the *Sharia*, to him it was cruelty to animals.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Maktubat-I Quddisiyya*, pp. 171-73.
2. R.C. Temple, *The Words of Lalla*, Cambridge, 1924, pp. 1-5.
3. M. Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 238-39.
4. *The World of Lalla*, pp. 113, 115, 177-78, 193; the verses are on p. 179.
5. Baba Nasib, *Rishi Nama*, India Office, Delhi, Persian, no. 731, 129a-138a; 'Abdu'l-Wahhab Nurl, *Futuhat-i Kubrawiyya*, Srinagar MS, II, 84b-6b.
6. *Futuhat-i Khbrawiyya*, f. 69b.
7. Ibid, f. 82a.
8. *Rajatarangini*, p. 126.
9. *Rishi Nama*, ff. 152b-55b; Muhammad A'zam, *Tarikh-i A'zami*, Lahore, 1303/1885-86, p. 64.

10

Six Centuries of Islamisation in Kashmir : Retrospect and Prospects

Mohammad Ishaq Khan

In this paper, I have attempted to study the history of Islam in Kashmir from a new angle. The crux of my argument is that the mass conversion to Islam in the Valley did not take place in a strict religious sense during any period of Kashmir history. In its Quranic sense, conversion or *inabah* is a conscious act on the part of the subject, not an event passively experienced. Conversion to Islam entails intellectual, emotional, and volitional elements, including the basic relationship to or affirmation of the faith in the transcendent Allah, belief in the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), devotion to the Prophet in personal life, commitment of fellowship to the community of believers (*muminun*), and the ethical transformation of life in accordance with the Quran and *Sunna.* Viewed against this theoretical formulation, mass conversion of groups to Islam in a strict religious sense seems inconceivable.

Historians have vague notions about the conversion to Islam in Kashmir. We are all familiar with the theory of forcible conversions, though rejected by historians on scientific grounds; however, the popular belief and, for that matter, even a plethora of works have since been written on this belief, that mass conversions to Islam took place in the Valley either through the miraculous exploits of saint missionaries

from Central Asia and Persia or through their 'searing missionary zeal'. In some scholarly works, a great deal of emphasis has been laid on the supernatural elements in the Sufis personality as drawing the common folk towards Islam. True, the role of *khanqahs* in the social life of the common people cannot be denied; but, it is doubtful whether the *khanqahs* really secured the conversion of non-Muslim population in a strict Quranic sense.

Looking at the process of Islamization in Kashmir from the standpoint of both history and religion, I have strong reasons to argue that what we generally call conversion to Islam is not any religious transmutation experienced by a group or groups in the context of the Quran, but it is, in reality, a historical and sociological process of acculturation. Notwithstanding some individual cases of conversions in a strict religious sense, the history of Islam in Kashmir has been a gradual and a continuous process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of immigrant groups from Central Asia and Persia by the people gradually breaking ties with their ancestral religion. This development is clearly noticeable in the writings of the Sanskrit chroniclers of the fifteenth century which are revelatory of the innermost tensions felt by the caste-conscious group of Brahmans and their reaction to the intrusion of alien ideas and practices. Islamization thus appears to be a gradual and a continuous process of social transition rather than any felt experience of groups in religious terms confined to a particular time or age in our history. Viewed even from the standpoint of two seminal organisations in the Valley, viz., the Ahi-i-Hadith in particular, and the Jamat-i-Islami in general, Kashmiri Muslims need to be converted afresh for accommodating Islamic beliefs to the local framework. The popular religious culture of Kashmiri Muslims thus continues to be challenged by the Great Tradition or High Culture or to put it simply by the Sharia-oriented culture as generally represented by the Ahi-i-Hadith and the Jamat.

Great and Little Traditions

In order to understand the history of islamization in Kashmir in an objective manner, it is therefore necessary to exam-

ine whether there really exists a dichotomy between the so-called Great tradition and the Little Tradition or, in other words, between the High Culture and the Popular Culture.

It must be pointed out at the outset that the history of Islam at the popular level has been bound up integrally with Lall Ded and Nur-ud-Din Rishi. The eulogization of these mystics in the Muslim chronicles and tazkiras is too well-known to merit any special mention here. What is of great significance to note here is the influence exercised by them over the rural folk through their mystical poetry for over centuries. There is little doubt that for a greater part of the history of Kashmir commoners' attitude towards life was influenced by their teachings rather than those of the Ulama whose influence was generally confined to the elite. Broadly speaking, the common folk were oriented towards the tombs of their Rishi saints rather than towards the mosques and *maktabs*. Although Nur-ud-Din always emphasized the importance of leading life in consonance with the spirit of the Quran and sunna, yet it was his early life which was chosen as a model by many a Rishi. Thus most Rishis chose the tops of mountains and other such places located in awesome sites of nature, connected with the traditional science of sacred geography, as their abode of worship. There were hardly any rural areas without a site of pilgrimage and a Rishi saint to whom the people did not turn to, in their moments of trial and thankfulness. Even springs became the objects of veneration as a result of their association with the Rishis. Consequently the contrast in the common man between Islam and Hinduism weakened thereby paving the way for the acceptance of Islam though in a diluted or distorted form.

But there is another side to the picture. For the commoner Nur-ud-Din was not merely a saint, but also transmitter and interpreter of two traditions viz., the protestant trend in Lal Ded's mystical tradition and the liberating content in the Islamic tradition as represented by the Kubrawi sufis. Modern scholars may continue in resuscitating Lall Ded as a Shaivite mystic. While I have no quarrel with them on this issue, I fail to understand why a myth continues to be perpetuated that Lall Ded remained immune to the Islamic influence. It would

be nothing short of an intellectual disaster to uproot Lall Ded from her environment. Of course, there is clear evidence in the source material that she had close ties with Sayyid Husain Simnani. The legend of her meeting with Husain Simnani's cousin, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, may be dismissed as a fabricated story by the so-called scientific historians, but, at least, it speaks of her association with Islam. And but for this she would not have protested against the supremacy of the Brahmanic priests, rituals evolved by them, and the social inequalities of her age. Thus Lall Ded did not represent the Great Tradition of Hinduism, as represented by great thinkers and idealists with their firm belief in the cherished notion of the Brahmanic supremacy, but, her songs present a picture of the actual hopes and fears of the commoners. For this reason alone she was described as an avatara of Kashmiris by her younger contemporary, Nur-ud-Din. The protestant trend of Lall Ded thus intermingled with the flowering resilient Islamic tradition of Muslim Rishis in the Valley to such a great extent that while the caste-conscious Brahmans disowned the wandering woman mystic, the common folk, undergoing the process of Islamic acculturation, extolled her to such great heights that in their consciousness she emerged as a renegade against Brahmanism. Various concoted stories in the hagiographical literature about Lall Ded's denunciation of the Brahmanic faith and even sacrilege caused by her to idols needs to be read in the context of the social ferment caused by the halo of her protest against Brahmanism.

Little wonder, therefore, Islam (as represented by the Rishis of Kashmir) bears the dominant influence of Lall Ded. Her poetry became a major vehicle for influencing the illiterate masses (particularly in rural society), who have had and still have an incredibly retentive memory for verse. It is of some significance that it was the Rishi, above all, who preserved the heritage of Lall Ded. In fact, the language which Nur-ud-Din spoke was not an individual inheritance but a social acquisition from the environment in which he grew up. Lall Ded's poetry came to be the daily bread of many Kashmiris of the period,who formed their WELTANSCHAUUNG in accordance with the picture presented to them by their two spiritual searchers. The importance of mystic poetry and lit-

erature to an average Kashmiri is evident even today to an observer of contemporary society in the Valley.

There is yet another significant dimension of the Rishi movement least studied by historians. When Nur-ud-Din was in his thirties he came in contact with the Kubrawi Sufis. Even Sayyid Ali refers to Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani's meetings with the ascetic Nur-ud-Din who exercised great influence over the local people. The Islamic influence, in fact, becomes dominant in Nur-ud-Din's poetry in the wake of his association with the Kubrawis. From Khat-i-irshad we learn that Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani not only recognised Nur-ud-Din as a man of saintly wisdom, but he even authorised him to carry on the mission which the Kubrawis could not successfully accomplish at the grassroots owing to the language barrier. No wonder, therefore, from now on Nur-ud-Din became a conscious missionary of Islam. He came out of seclusion, denounced asceticism and self-isolation, and even contrived Sanskrit words in such a way as to recast their definitons, with the purpose of anchoring Kashmiri society in a wider system of Islam. His effort was, indeed, in the spirit of apologetic, but the fact remains that despite his best efforts at creating sharia consciousness, the commoners, continued to persist in their belief structure.

Peculiarities of Islam in Kashmir

This is amply borne out by some marked characteristics of Islam in Kashmir which are summed up below:

1. Islam in the Rishiwar has always fostered the traditions of non-violence through shrines particularly of the Rishis.
2. Vegetarianism continues to be practised on the anniversaries of many Muslim Rishis.
3. The litanies in the mosques and shrines continue to be recited in a manner which speak of the absorption of the local practice in the Islam of Kashmiris.

4. Kashmiri Muslims are often seen reciting aurad-i-fatiyya with folded hands -- a practice which was uncommon in the religious assemblies of the kubrawi sufis.

5. Local shrines, commonly known as asthans after asthapan, continue to be the centre of pilgrimage for a considerable number of Muslims.

6. Kashmiri Muslims' veneration for the relics of saints and the Prophet is proverbial.

7. In the rural areas the festivals of the saints continue to be celebrated with great eclat. In the city of Srinagar, rituals connected with the celebration of Miraj, Milad-un-Nabi, and the anniversaries of four caliphs of Islam are peculiar to the Kashmir region alone. Consequently, the dargah of Hazratbal has assumed central improtance in the lives of a great majority of Kashmiri Muslims so much so it has been elevated to Madina thani *(Second Madina)*.

8. During the early hours of morning, one may often observe some Muslims, not unlike their Pandit brethren, turning their faces with folded hands towards the shrines situated on the Vitasta.

9. Another feature of Islam in the Valley is the holding of private religious assemblies known as *mould, khatam-i-shriff* and so on. At these gatherings priests are entertained with sumptuous meals after having performed the rituals of reciting *zikr wazaif* and *durad*. The priests receive a handsome remuneration for performing the rituals evolved by them through centuries in an organized manner.

10. The holding of *fatiha* ceremony on Fridays in memory of the deceased is a particularity of Kashmiri Islam.

It is not possible to dilate upon all the characteristics of Kashmiri Islam in this paper. For want of time I have referred to certain distinctive features which give a unique identity to the Islam of the Kashmiris.

Interaction between Two Traditions

However, it would be wrong to suppose on the basis of the foregoing discussion that the Great Tradition of Islam with its emphasis on strict adherence to the Quran and *Sunna* has not prospered in the Valley. The fact is that the Great Tradition of Islam, or in other words, Islam as represented by the Ulama and learned sufis, has itself thrived on the basis of its meaningful intervention with the Little Tradition and the popular culture. The two traditions have thus existed not as mutual antagonisms, as laboriously shown by the Orientalists in their widely works read in the West; but rather as interchanging traditions. In this historical process Islam has ceased to be a concrete concept or a dogms of theologians. As a matter of fact, Islam has evolved as a huge historical movement which has given birth to distinctive Islamic traditions in various cultural zones of Islam. The cultural dimension of Islam is represented by a system of symbols, existing concurrently in various interpretations of the Quran and course of Islamic development, in literature, in art objects, in ceremonies, in festivals, in anniversaries of the saints, in the mentalities of individuals, and above all in the never-ceasing discourses in the mosques and the shrines on what constitutes true Islam. As a historical experience, Islam by virtue of its multiple expressions links the Great Tradition or High Culture of Islam to everyday life, and joinining the two,allows for variety and individuality In no sense, however,Islam in its regional or historical manifestation is divorced from the true spirit of the Sharia as practised by the great teachers of Islamic law and the sufis; nor it is above and totally beyond the teachings of the Prophet. Islam is actually the history of the changing pattern of social behaviour in relation to the professed religion. In other words, it is precisely a continuous movement of individuals and groups, departing gradually not only from any form of their traditional ties to the local religious culture, but also as a gradual recess towards bringing about a salutary change in the behavioral pattern in conformity with the true spirit of the Quran and the Sunna.

Orderly Evolution

It would appear, then, that mass conversions to Islam in Kashmir at a particular stage in its history and also synthesis of syncretism in the Islam of Kashmiris are misconceived notions. Conversion to Islam is a development of a social process. As a matter of fact, it is a never-ending process. To describe a great majority of Kashmiri Muslims as mushriks in view of their ties to the local culture is not only unwarranted but also tantamount to rejecting the historical and sociological process of a people's assimilation in the wider system of Islam. Likewise, to describe the efforts of the Ahl-i-Hadith in islamizing Kashmiri Muslims as a somewhat far-fetched dream is to ignore the potential significance of the *Tauhidic* consciousness that they have already generated among the devotees of the shrines. In the contemporary social scene one is forced to observe that as an inevitable consequence of the Islamizing process of the Ahl-i-Hadith, efforts are afoot in the Valley in turning shrines into dynamic centres of Islamic learning.

To cap it all, the history of Kashmir's transition to Islam during the last six centuries or so appears to be a matter of meaningful and positive interaction between faith and society through orderly evolution. The empirical truth is that the Great Tradition of Islam manifests its vitality in keeping alive its Great Tradition which is still capable of entering into an endless dialogue with Muslims on questions not only crucial to their personal relationship with the Creator, but also to the society they live in. Viewed in this context, Islam has not caused total destruction of ancient culture, but rather guided the course of its development in such a manner that it has been gradually steering it emerging itself out of ethnocentric beliefs into the broad sea of humanism.

11

Role of Mystics and Sufis in the Propagation of Islam in Kashmir

Mirza G.H. Arif Beg

The salubrious climate of Kashmir, with its gorgeous forests and quiet high mountains, has been throughout ages, selected by God-seeking men for solitude, contemplation and self-abnegation.

Although a land of idolatory, the Valley has had saints, who worshipped the one supreme Being, rising above the rituals followed by even the righteous among the masses. These seekers of Truth have been known as mystics; those who seek union with God Almighty by contemplation or self-surrender or absorption into Him, and believe in spiritual apprehension of truths beyond understanding.

There has been no dearth of such mystics in this divine land, the Paradise on earth. And I believe that it is because of this fact that Kashmir has so readily got absorbed into the mainstream of Islam, the parallel of which can only be found in the Arabian Peninsula in the Ist century of the Islamic Calendar.

Of these mystics, the first to visit Kashmir, miraculously, in answer to the prayers of king Renchan Shah of Kashmir in 725 Hijra, i.e. round about 1341 AD, was the famous Bulbul Shah, known as such because of his appearance as a Bulbul (Kashmiri nightingale) a beautiful bird, on the early morning of

the night that the said king had set as the target of his selecting the religion for himself.

Bulbul Shah, named Syed Sharaf Uddin, had come to know through a vision the desire of the king Renchan Shah and had, by his spiritual prowess (known as *Tayyi Makaani*), flown bodily to appear as the first man to be seen by him (the king) through his window, spanning towards the River Jhelum, flowing right below his palace.

Though seemingly unbelievable in our times, yet the mystics have had such supernatural powers and could control both time and space. By attaining union with God, they could possess godly attributes, as Iqbal has admitted in his verse,

"Haath hai Allah Kaa Bandaye Momin kaa haath,
Ghalib Kaar Aafreen Kaar Kushaa Kaar Saar."

A Momin's i.e. a mystic's hand is the hand of God Himself -Omnipotent, creative, capable of unfolding mysteries and able to perform supernatural acts.

The king Renchan Shah adopted the religion of the stranger, Bulbul Shah, along with his followers and his family members. Communication with each other is yet a puzzle for the intellect, because it cannot imagine, that one who commands time and space can command languages as well.

Bulbul Shah was at a very high altitude of spirituality, and therefore a large number of the tenets of Islam could not pass on to the new converts.

In 762 Hijra, about 37 years after Bulbul Shah (725-727) there appeared another equally great mystic, namely Syed Tajud-Din, a first cousin of Shah Hamdan. He settled in Shahabuddin Pora, with a population of about 60 thousand people, most of whom became his disciples. Even Sultan Shah-Abuddin who ruled Kashmir those days became one of his ardent followers.

There was yet another mystic known as Sayyid Hussain Simnaani, who arrived in Kashmir in 775 Hijra, and settled in Kulgam, where he is buried and was responsible for propagation of Islam in that area, known as Devasar, in addition to

having the distinction of becoming the murshid of Shaikh Nooruddin Noorani, the saint-poet, who later on led the Rishi cult in Kashmir.

But the main credit of laying the foundation of Islam of a sound footing in Kashmir goes to Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, the Shah Hamdan, known as the real founder of the religion. A versatile genius and a scholar of renowned fame, he wrote one hundred and seventy big and small books, and gave the masses a treatise known as *'Aaraddi Fathiyyah'*, giving all the important fundamentals of Islam, to be recited in chorus, both in the mosques and in private gatherings, a big volume to the kings called *Zakheeratul Male* denoting their duties towards their God and to the masses they governed, and to the divine scholars he gave a book of forty lyrics, called *Chilhil Israar*, forty secrets.

Though Islam had by then spread to a large number of households of Kashmir, Shariat, the basic tenets of Islam and the religion in its wide sense, had not been preached by the great mystic before him for about half a century, for he visited Kashmir in 774 fifty years later than Bulbul Shah, who had been able to live only for two years in the Valley.

Shah Hamadan had travelled all over the then-known world thrice to contact spiritual personalities, and acquire knowledge of religion and mysticism, the highest stage of the road leading to the Almighty, and had attained perfection by learning things from as many as 35 murshids from whom he had received the certificates of accomplishment, known as *Khati Irshaad.*

Shah Hamdan combined in himself the perfect acquisition of the wordly knowledge then available, particularly about the religion of Islam, and the other-worldly knowledge known as *Ilmi Ludun.*

It is important to know that a Muslim becomes a perfect follower of the Holy Prophet (Puh) only after having acquired mastery over the three stages, described by the Great Messenger himself. To quote him, the first stage is : Ashsh araequatu aqwaali, Shariat is my word (my atterances).

2nd Attareeqatu Afaali, Tareegat is what I do (my actions)

and the third "Alhaqeeqatu ahwaalee" ...... Haqeeqat is my inner self (my spiritual attainments).

And it is this last stage i.e. Haqeeqat which, in reality, is what is known as mysticism. And it is this ultimate goal of union with God that is the aim of all the divine persons and has been so through ages of the great souls of all religions. It is at this level that the name religion gets lost, and ishq (divine Love) remains and as very aptly described by one of Kashmir's great saint-poet, Habbi (Habeebullah Nowshahri) "Mazhabul Ishq Muzhabul Waahid"; "The religion of Love is one universal creed," without any barrier of country or religion.

In Kashmir, as said above, men of this highest order of spirituality were available during the fourteenth century A.D. when the great Muslim mystics and scholars visited this Valley. And it was because of this fact that Islam spread so quickly and so smoothly all over the Valley in less than a century.

Propagation of Islam by these mystics has not been in the shape of the normal method of conversion from one religion to the other, but by exchange of spiritual experiences, of sharing each other's knowledge in the field and by acceptance of the superiority of one mystic by the other.

At the time of Shah Hamdan's arrival in the year 774 Hijra, the greatest ascetic of the time namely Lalla predicted of his coming to the Valley, and put on clothes and received him, accepting him as a greater soul.

She became Shah Hamdan's first disciple, followed by another great Brahman-saint, whose conversion to Islam brought about a revolutionary change, and hundreds of people embraced Islam happily. Lalla had reached the highest stage of absorption into God himself and had declared in her poetry that Lalla got lost into Him and it is He who is there and Lalla ceases to be.

The advent of mystics was followed by an indigenous form of the spiritual movement of the great saint-poet Nund Rishi, the Rishism.

The term 'Rishi' according to Hassan, the historian, means a saint who completely surrenders to the will of God, and abstains from all the pleasures of life, which in other words signifies the same spiritual eminence that a mystic attains.

Rishis by abandoning the wordly life, by their celabacy living by giving up of the family life and spending their lives in seclusion, fasting most of the time or living on vegetables, wild fruits or what little they could get from their surroundings, but contemplating and praying all the time, came very near the Brahman Yogies and Sanyasis. So their appeal was more effective and gathered more momentum, after Nund Rishi left the cave at the behest of Mir Mohammad Hamdani, son of Shah Hamdan, who initiated him into the higher stages of mysticism, and gave him the title of Noorud-Din-Nooraani.

Among Nund Rishi's famous disciples, who after acceptance of Islam at his hands, were responsible for propagation of Islam on a large scale, two may be mentioned here.

One such great Sadhu was the famous Buma Sadh of Buma Zowaa, a village adjacent to the well-known shrine of Mattan, Anantnag. As a Brahman he had attained such a high spiritual stage, that due to the conquest of time and space (Tayyi makaanu Zameen) he could bathe in five widely separated holy springs of the Valley and after covering hundreds of miles in a short span of time, would return to his hut for his morning prayers.

To convert such a great spiritualist was an uphill task for Nund Rishi, now Shaikh Noorud-Din-Nooraani Alamdari Kashmir. Both are reported to have shown their hidden powers, but the Shaikh ultimately prevailed upon the Sadhu, converted him to his faith, and named him Baba Bamuddin. Hundreds of his followers accepted Islam without any hesitation.

The second great disciple of the Shaikh, was a Rajput of Kisthwar, known as Zaina Singh, who had accepted Islam in

his early life because of a spiritual fiat of the great saint, and was renamed as Baba Zainauddin wali, whose shrine is situated at Aish Muqaam, Anantnag. He was also responsible for the propagation of Islam on a sizeable scale.

He surpassed his Guru, Nund Rishi in his attainments to such a degree that the Shaikhul Aalam had to admit "gow ti gorge me war ditam diwo". A disciple has gone ahead of his Guru. O' my lord bless me too with such a blessing.

Rishis of Kashmir, whose number is reported to have been more than two thousand during Akbar the Great, the Moghul Emperor's period, have been the real sufis of Kashmir, who could rank with the great mystics, and because of their resemblance to the sufis could be termed as such.

A sufi, generally speaking, is one who wears woollen garments, which Rishis did in addition to using wooden chappals, and feeding themselves on dry vegetables and denying themselves all the comforts and pleasures of life.

In addition to the propagation of Islam by the mystics, Rishis and Sufis in Kashmir, there has been a spiritual movement going on known as Peer Mureedi, not of the business type that we see these days, but of initiating even Muslims by their *murshids* into Salook or sufism, to show their followers the path of righteous (Taquaa), to purify their souls and lead them to spiritual heights.

There are instances of people belonging to either Islam or Hinduism who have *murshids* of the religion other than the one they are known to follow; which clearly shows that Kashmiris even during these days of darkness seek light irrespective of the source it comes from.

12

Kashmir
Islam, Ideology and Society

Peer Giyas ud-din

The Image of Kashmir on the Eve of Islam

On the advent of Islam, Kashmir presented a dismal socio-economic picture. Extreme social anarchy, political instability, heavy dozes of taxation levied on people by oppressive rulers were the order of the day. (*Kashir*, Dr. Sofi; *History of Kashmir* Vol 2 (Fauq)).

Sambha Dev was an oppressive, incompetent ruler. Shah Mirza of Swat (Shams ud-Din Shah) assumed the authority of kingship, "a benevolent monarch, a liberal and just and judicious administrator". The new ruler abolished oppressive taxes. State levy was fixed on a sixth of the produce only. Such progressive measures, gave tremendous economic relief to the common people. In Kashmir, the in early phase of Islam, it was its liberationist role – socio-economic and political – that had a tremendous appeal to the people to accept the new creed.

The liberal religious philosophical background provided by 'Advaita-Shavism,' the essence of which was monisticism – finally culminating in the Bhakti movement proved also a facilitating factor for acceptability of Islamic monotheism. In this context, Hazrat Bulbul Shah, an eminent personality of Suhawardhy order, a mystic sufi played a significant role. Ranjan Shah, got converted to Islam–a Buddhist Tibetan ruler.

"Islam made its way into Kashmir," says M.A. Stein, "Not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion, for which the influx of foreign adventures, both from the south and central Asia, had prepared the ground". It was spread by sufi saints; the tallest was Amir Kabir, great Amir, Sayyid Ali Hamadani - Shah Hamdan. He was an erudite scholar, great orator, simple and spartan in habits.

Crisis of Islamic Intellectual Tradition and Dispute over Conception of State

With the spread of Islam in Kashmir, an intense ideological debate was raging in the subcontinent over the conception of state in the surroundings of dominant Hindu majority. When Islam penetrated India, the early Islamic prime and glory was over. Monarchy and empires had come into existence, alien to the Islamic concepts of democracy, Musawat and anti-feudal stance.

In the medieval age, during the rule of Delhi Sultanate, the only book on political theory was the 'Fatwai-Jhandari', of the famous historian, Zia ud-din Bami. The book is the most thought-challenging work of the Sultanate period.

Kashmiri Sultans - Sultan Shams-ud-din and the glorious king Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin known for religious tolerance and evolution of composite culture - imbibed their ideological ideas of state from the debate ranging in India in the medieval ages.

The medieval muslim state in Kashmir was not a theocracy but a monarchy. The head was a Muslim, but the state was not Islamic. The State did not follow the injunctions of the Holy Quran. It did not function under the guidance of the Muslim theologians. The great theoretician of the medieval age on state - Zia ud-din Barni, in his Fatwa-I-Jhandari, says, "true religion consists in following in the footsteps of the prophet ...... But Royal government on the contrary can be carried only by following the policies of 'Khasru-Parvez' and the great emperors of Iran. Prophethood is perfection of religion and kingship is the perfection of the worldly fortune."

The early enlightened Sultans in Kashmir knew well that the Arabicized Islamic laws were not wholly applicable to Kashmir. Even during Moghul period in 1258, the Moghuls destroyed the caliphate and a new era began in Islamic civilization.

In the early phase of the rule of Sultans in Kashmir, the theory of basis of kingship was not the 'Shariat' of Islam but the Zawabit or state laws made by the king.

It is not suggested here that the medieval Kashmir state was a perfectly secular state. The medieval state, like the medieval states in the subcontinent, did derive part of its political support from a religious source.

In fact the ruling class comprised both Hindu and Muslim nobility. Moreover, as K.M. Ashraf has pointed out "It is difficult to distinguish the lower classes of Muslims from the lower masses of Hindus".

Kashmir : Continuity and Progress of Mysticism

At the end of the classical period, Kashmir gained a new position as the meeting place of traditional Hindu thought and culture and the new Islamic thought and culture. Monistic utterances of Lall Ded, the lady mystic of the 14th century are the best representative of Kashmir's contribution to the corpus of the poetry of Vedanta and Bhakti in Indian languages. Of the many orders, the Rishi order founded in Kashmir by Nund Rishi was the most popular, and in spiritual olutlook and exercise, nearest to the Hindu school of Bhakti. Both founded their faith upon the principle of pantheistic monism (Advaita, Wahadat-ul-Wajud) and both followed similar methods of self-control and purification (Yoga and Zhikr). According to Dr. Mohibbul Hassan, "influence of Islam can also be discerned on Advaita Shaivism as represented by the teachings of Lalla Ded".

The most prominent feature of the popular movement in the era was the background of Hindu-Muslim relations; as a result, many of these popular saint-singers became the apostles of a synthesis and rapproachment, aided by com-

mon points in advaita and sufism. However, Dr. M. Hassan has maintained that Saiyyds were averse to 'Rishis'.

Kashmir : The All Embracing Philosophy of Love

The thrust of sufi activities began only towards the end of 14th century. The ideological basis of sufism – unity of being (Wahadat-ul-Wajud) advocated by Ibn Arabi remained intact. Like Buddhism, sufism in Kashmir split into two schools of thought; an ordhodox trend, its proponents were Saiyyd migrated from Persia and central Asia and an indigenous sufi order known as the Rishi order which preached the all-embracing love and encouraged peaceful co-existence. The orthodox consorted with the kings, feudal lords, nobles, dabbled in politics, perpetuated succession of the saints and their families; mysticism degenerated into occultism, passivism, grave-worship and saint worship.

Mysticism in Kashmir is unique in being the amalgam of Hindu mysticism, Buddhist influences and sufism of Islam. Kashmiri sufi poetry is a true reflection of this stream. The Kashmiri mysticism, as already indicated by me, was very much influenced by Shaivism of Kashmir, and liberal and general attitude of Rumi. The theme of its mystic philosophy was that happiness lies in Faqr (poverty). In the houses of worldly men there is nothing but sadness and sorrow. In strict adherence to the main precepts of "Kashj-ul-Mahjub", authored by Imam Ali Hujri, the Rishis of the Valley were men of prolonged sadness and deep reflection.

In the dark phase of history it is concomitant and there are precedents when Muslim society drifted away from its pure and simple ways of life and thought, and religion became a mere formality, cramped by hair-splitting theology and deadened by dogmatic formalism. The pacificism of the early mystic orders degenerated into passivism. Mystic customs and practices lost their spiritual significance and become a license for loose behaviour.

Rishis of Kashmir propogated love, faith, toleration and sympathy which included even the enemy. Higher mysticism is nothing but service of humanity.

With the penetration of Islam in Kashmir, conciliation and co-existence among the various cultural groups was not only a moral and intellectual demand but an urgent social necessity. The Muslim Rishis, however, rose to the occasion and released syncretic forces among the various cultural groups, communities of Kashmir and helped in the development of a common cultural outlook.

Kashmir : Ideological Clash of the Two Trends -- A Turning Point in the Sub-Continent

The intellectual centre mainly related to sufi thought founded by prince Dara Shukoh turned into an epicentre of ideological battles, whose shock waves were felt all over the subcontinent. Dara Shukoh was a disciple of Mulla Shah Qadri (Badakshani). They echoed the ideas of Tasawwuf of Ibn-Arabi (1165-1240). Mulla Shah rejected the authority (Taqlid). He belived in essential unity of God (Wahadat-al-Wajud), devoid of every attribute, quality and relation.

Mulla Shah, the teacher of Dara was not a formalist and ritualist. He stated his views: "O, you who have faith in the Real, do not go near ritual prayer (Namaz) in the state of intoxication (Sakr) and bewilderment (Masti). The state of intoxication is higher than the rendering of prayers ..... even if the bewilderment is for worldly and profane then the approach to prayer is forbidden, so that prayer may not be polluted which is a condition of honouring prayer. But if the intoxication is transcendent, then again approach to prayer is forbidden, for in this case it is showing respect to intoxication. When the prayed one and the carpet of prayer disappear, who reads the prayer"?

The other luminary, an active exponent of this trend was Mohasin Fani, author of the great treatise, "Dabistan-i-Mazahib: a sort of study of comparative religions and the varieties of religious experience. He was a Kashmiri and the Cultural Academy of Kashmir has traced his grave at Gurgari Mohalla. Fani was a close collaborator of Sarmad's philosophical postulates. Sarmad was a free thinker, mystic and an interesting personality. Mohasin and Sarmad were pillars of

Dara's mystic thought. Sarmad was executed by Aurangzeb while Mulla Shah and Fani were denounced for their ideas.

Ideological Basis of Kashmir National Movement and Islam

In proximity to traditional, historical and cultural development of Kashmir, a movement was born for freedom under the leadership of an enlightened Muslim elite - called Muslim Conference in 1931. A section of intellectuals, engrossed in appearances and perhaps incapable of deeper probings in the social process, consider the 1931 outburst to be essentially communal in character. In a region with a predominant Muslim population it is only natural that the movement for emancipation was spearheaded by the Kashmiri Muslims. It may be noted that the religion of the ruling dynasty happened to be Hinduism and the main educated classes in the Valley, who were manning all the educated class in the rungs of administration also happened to be Kashmiri Pandits. In such a historical context, the movement appeared to be the outburst of the oppressed Muslims against Hindu rulers. But this is a very superficial view which ignores the basic social and political processes operating under the surface. The 1931 revolt was not purely a Muslim revolt, but an authentic revolt of the people of the State against the political, social and economic oppression by the ruling class and their henchmen. The rebellious element were the Muslim intelligentsia, the trading class and the mass of peasantry who were groaning under the yoke of feudal rule. Hence, seen historically, the characteristics of the revolt were essentially neither unhealthy nor communal but soundly progressive and national. The limitation imposed by the communal form was important but the logic of its national content was of far greater significance.

The Chief criterion in analysing the influence of the religion on the ideology of different social strata should not be religion per se, but it should be what religious traditions are singled out for emphasis, what ends these traditions serve and the interests of what classes they promote.

Even during the Muslim Conference period, which subsequently got converted to National Conference, the old religious shell began to be filled more and more with new content. The secular-minded intelligentsia began to question simple "revival" of traditions of the past and to think about changing these traditions to suit the new conditions. A close study, however, reveals that this nascent movement fought its way to assume a progressive and secular complexion. The essential content proved too powerful for the form. The form was rendered obsolete and thrown in the dust-bin of history.

The main religious-cum-educational organizations of the Punjab which supported the Kashmiri movement were not dogmatic and fanatical in outlook. The Anjuman-i-Hamayat-ul-Islam' the 'Majlis Ahrrar' and 'Ulamas of Deoband', 'Jamiat-ulama-Hind' were militant, anti-British, Nationalist organizations.

The composition of leaders belonged to Aligarh school of thought who provided main political ideological leadership. The leadership was reared and nurtured on the rationalism of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. This school of thought attacked religious bigotry and advocated secular education, and modern values of western culture.

It was logic of history that in 1939, National Conference, emerged as a solid organization in the State. In 1944, "the revolutionary character of Islam" aimed at fusing traditional Muslim values with the ideas of the progressive reconstruction of society paved way to the adoption of – 'New Kashmir' – a radical socialist programme. "Today one cannot be true to the spirit of Islam without being a revolutionary", said Ahmed Aroua, one of the Muslim ideologues.

Anti-Secular Trends and Search for New Path

In the search for new path, a path of secularisation – against both Muslim and Hindu communalism – and evolving a radical programme in conformity with the essence of Islam, the patriotic progressive intelligentsia of Kashmir, considered that Islam was closely connected with secular and egalitarian concepts about social justice and in the course of anti-impe-

rialist and anti-feudal struggle, it integrated into nationalism; awakening patriotic sentiments in the people, religious traditions in the conditions prevailing were used as a means of involving the Muslim majority in the State in secular matters.

The right wing conservative forces who parted at the time of this qualitative leap of ideological stance in 1939 and organised "neo-Muslim Conference" openly used Islam as a barrier in the way of deepening and development of socialist orientation i.e. essence of Islam.

The struggle of the Kashmiri people against the Pakistani invaders, the unity of Kashmiri masses and the decision of the National Conference of J & K to link the State's destiny with that of India, greatly contributed to the strengthening of the secular sentiment in our country's politics. The decision of accession was taken by Kashmiri people, when the sub-continent's politics was swayed by the tragedy of partition, and "dagger communalism" in Jammu Division.

Sardar Patel and Acharya Kriplani (then Congress President) were taking a thoroughly communal-chauvnistic position. And naturally it was being fully exploited by the RSS and other communal forces.

But in spite of the adverse circumstances, the Kashmiri secularism stood the severest test. The assassination of Gandhi, and the glorious struggle of the people of Kashmir became the main instruments to build a genuinely secular and democratic society in India. The torch of secularism in Kashmir was illuminating a new path at the difficult turn of history.

Islam, Secularism, Democracy and Socialism

To defend the concept of democracy and secularism a massive effort of all secular forces is the need of the hour.

The massive propaganda campaign is needed on the democratic traditions of Islam as against the bigoted, harmful preachings of reactionary Muslim organisations like the Jamat-i-Islami.

Conclusion

The decay in the intellectual enlightenment and fundamentalism in certain sections of Kashmiri Muslims are the main factors which are proving to be the main hurdle in the further historical development of Islamic liberal, sufi and rational thought.

Islam succeeded, because it brought all-round development in thought. Dogmatism and fundamentalism were not characteristic of the early Muslims in Kashmir.

The Quran has a definitely historical outlook, and views the world as a process of changing history.

The idea never comes to the fundamentalists that prophethood may have ended but prophetic mission has never ceased.

With Toynbee, we believe that neither the zealots' attitude of complete rejection nor the attitude of abject self-surrender is likely to win the final acceptance of the Muslim world.

13

Perspectives Of Social Change In Kashmiri Women (1900-1947)

Madhavi Yasin

The Kashmiri women presented a sorry spectacle, during the period under study. The illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and inclement weather forced them to remain unclean and unwashed. Lack of hygienic conditions and the filthy atmosphere subjected them to various contagious diseases. The early marriage had dwarfed their personality. The christian Missionaries of the Church Mission Society (hence CMS) were moved by the pathetic and pitiable conditions of Kashmiri people both males and females.[1] Their work was not smooth. The autocratic government put every kind of obstacle in their way. Besides the language, unworthiness of roads also presented a formidable problem.[2] The Missionaries braving all sorts of insurmountable difficulties, official pressures and apathy of the government worked like crusaders in the way of God. They started with education. Hardly one percent of the women were then literate, which made them superstitious and credulous.[3]

The Missionaries As An Agent of Social Change

The first lady missionary to go to Kashmir in 1894 was a young girl named Miss Irene Patric.[4] She died of typhoid in Leh in 1897 at the altar of her duty. It is interesting to note

that while the boys' school began with Pandits, (in Kashmir the Hindus are called Pandits, there is no caste system among the Hindus), girls' education began with the Muslims. The Hindu parents needed much pursuasion to send their daughters to schools.[5] After the death of Miss Patrie, the girls education was continued by Miss Frances Mackay in private houses until 1909. In 1909 Dr. Kate Knowles ran a small school at Habakadal in Srinagar, in addition to her medical work as a consultant for all Mission Schools in Kashmir. It had 17 pupils on its rolls.[6]

The founding of the CMS Girls School is normally taken as October 1912, when Miss Violet Fitze opened the Memorial School CMS at Fateh Kadal better known as Miss Fitze's School.[7] In 1914 she reported that there was not a single Kashmiri woman teacher.[8]

Miss Fitze's mission to educate and enlighten the Kashmiri women was beset with difficulties. But with undaunted spirit, she taught her students lessons in cleanliness, honesty and social intercourse in their own language 'Kashmiri'. For the first time a Hindu girl Tulsi studied with the Muslim girls. There was such a change in her that amidst sobs she said while leaving the school that if she was ever a mother, she would not say that her children should not mix with the Muslims.[9]

She gave to the Hindu widows an identity of their own. They were made economically independent by engaging in the brass industry and other crafts. She had sanguine hopes for a bright future for Kashmir, which she characterised as 'arriving'. Her mission was taken up with unmatched dedication by Miss M.P. Mallinson in October 1922.[11] By inculcating in women the idea of self-respect, she ushered in a new era in Kashmir. Besides teaching, she also freed their minds from the shackles of superstitions, and time-worn customs. She taught them to be clean and smart, and the advantages of ventilation.[12] She wrought a change in dress as the common *pheron* was not conducive for school activities.[13] She also motivated the girls to discard nose ring, huge heavy earrings, wooden clogs as because of pollution, leather shoes could

not be worn. She also created an aversion to the child marriage, so that girls were made happy and cheerful. She happily reported about a party thrown by Lady Wood at the Residency for the CMS Girl Students:

> The Girls went off in the School Shikaras, attired in their clean school pherons, fearfully proud of being paddled along by three of the Residency Boatmen-drinking tea and tucking into a spread of Kulchas-sweets and fruit to the strains of the club gramophone, running races on the springy turf under the Chenars, then a glorious red in their autumn glory; choosing prizes from undreamt of possessions, such as brooches, little mirrors, horses and coloured handkerchiefs, and finally going away with bags of sweets and bunches of flowers was all too wonderful for words[14].

Thus her mission was successful. Again, she proudly wrote:

> Yes, freedom for the women and girls of this fair land, freedom from dirt, disease and `dastur', especially the evil customs of child marriage, of the joint family system and its disastrous results.[15]

Her students' handwork were exhibited at the All India Educational Exhibition, held in Srinagar in 1942, where they were very much appreciated.[16] Thus the Missionaries initiated a process of social change which suited to the ethos and culture of Kashmir. It earned the handsome encomiums from the government, which was sceptic in the beginning.[17]

The other equally important philanthropic work undertaken by the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (C.E.Z.M.S.) in cooperation with the C.M.S. was opening of the Zenana (Women) hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir State. The Maharaja also changed his stand towards them. They constructed Diamond Jubilee Zenana Hospital in Srinagar, which received grants from the royal treasury to help maintain its upkeep and establishment.[18] Dr. Neve's efforts are worthy of mention. On November 25, 1899, he wrote to the Darbar for a site at Sarul in Anantnag to rebuild the John Bishop Memo-

rial Hospital. There is a thick file on this matter in the State Archives, Jammu, which proves their dedicated persuasion to get the land allotted for the hospital. A copy of the agreement with signatures between A. Neve TRCS, Senior Medical Missionary, Church Missionary Society, Kashmir, and Maharaja Pratap Singh is still with the S. A. J.[19] In this connection H.V. Cobb, Assistant Resident's remarks are very significant:

> As I think you know I am very much in *sympathy* with missionary work pure and simple. But when it is coupled with really first class medical work as in the case with the Neve's institution, I cannot help thinking it deserved the support of all creeds and classes; may all Hindus, Musalmans and Christians find a common foot-hold in what a celebrated French author describes as the religion of human suffering.[20]

Even the Swiss Missionaries Messrs Damial Voumard and Robert Barger were granted permission for the welfare activities in Khaplu, Baltistan and Srinagar.[21] Sisters of Mercy were granted permission to establish a hospital in Baramulla.[21(a)] Besides the Missionaries also established King Edward Zenana Hospital, a female Hospital and leper asylum, respectively in Jammu, Gilgit and Srinagar.[22] The Government consistently gave adequate facilities for getting medicines and other items for use in the missionary hospitals. The Government nevertheless kept them under perfect surveillance.[23]

The Government Enterprise

The Christian Missionaries acted as a catalytic agent to the government in bringing social change through education. The Administrative Reports issued by the Darbar throw ample light on this aspect. The Reports are generally annual but some were half-yearly, two-yearly or three-yearly as well.

About the education of Women, the Annual Administrative Reports (hence called AAR) from Samvat 1947 (1890-91 A.D.) to Samvat 1958-60 (1901-04 A.D) draw a blank. But in Samvat 1961 (1904-05 A.D.) the female education is mentioned. The State provided funds for establishing two girls' schools in Srinagar, one for the Hindus and the other for the

Muslims to be managed by leading men of both the communities separately under the supervision of the State Educational authorities. This means that there were separate schools for the Muslim and the Hindu girls.[24]

The female education in Kashmir as in other parts of India suffered from popular prejudices.[25] Apart from public apathy, there was a lack of trained teachers in spite of the offer of high salaries by the State. Almost every AAR complains about it during our period of study.[26] The School at Baramulla was closed on account of this during winter.[27] There were no good buildings and funds.[28]

A very good feature of the educational policy of the government was that it was totally free[29] and scholarships were given as an incentive. Even *khillats* were presented to the trained teachers.[30] During 1911-12 A.D. an impetus was given to the female education by deputing a lady teacher with an award of a scholarship of Rs. 18 per mensem, to the female normal school at Lahore. One of the most encouraging features of the year was the appointment of a lady Inspector in the grade of Rs. 100-10-150 per mensem for supervising girls' education.[31] The government during 1927-30 A.D. sanctioned 10 scholarships of Rs.10 per mensem and Rs. 40/- per mensem for each girl wishing to study within the State and colleges outside the State respectively.[32] The AAR for 1926-27 showed that the number of female students belonging to the educationally backward communities, viz. the Muslims, the Rajputs and the Sikhs was steadily progressing. A chart is given which shows percentage of increase in the number of their scholars being 21, 16 and 3 respectively.[33] Covered motor-buses were engaged at places to carry girls to schools and back to their homes.[34]

The government followed the policy of the British Government of the grants-in-aid system.[35] The Management Committees of the aided schools were taking active interest in the promotion of education among the girls and they were helped with technical advice, such as method of teaching, discipline etc. by the Inspectress of the Schools.[36] Thus the coming of the private enterprise was a laudable feature.

Training schools for teachers were also opened, AAR for 1915-16 is a landmark in the progress of female education. An Educational Conference was held in Srinagar in September 1915, to discuss the school curriculum like use of vernacular medium and school hygiene etc. The Conference came to the conclusion that the curriculum required careful revision with a view to rendering instruction more practical and useful.[37]

The AAR for the year 1931 is very important. It lays emphasis not only on education but on the general development of the women's personality. Women Welfare Associations were established, chaired by the Minister-in-charge of the Municipalities. The Kashmir Association was inaugurated in 1927. Each Association was divided into 4 sections (1) Education (2) Health (3) Industry (4) Recreation.

In Srinagar under the auspices of the Educational Section, the work of education was taken up independently. It imparted free education. Education for adult women was a priority, Volunteers were enlisted to teach women in their homes. Education in the vernacular was emphasised and for this text books in Kashmiri were prepared. A women's league was founded with the object of banding women together for self-development, social service and social reform.

In the health section, maternity and child welfare work was vigorously done both on the educational and practical side.

In the industrial section, the object was to teach widows and destitute women to earn their livelihood.

For recreation, a park was presented with swings and seasaws by the Maharaja to the women.[38]

The AAR given in the footnote supply a detailed statistical information regarding the stratification, classification, scholarships, attendance, training of teachers, refresher courses, expenditure and curriculum etc.[39]

General Records

The General Department records housed in the State Archives, Jammu, testify that the government was interested in the welfare of Women. It kept a watch on the activities of the Women's Welfare Association.[40] The Government of India was also apprised of the welfare activities of the State.[41]

The Darbar looked to the maintenance of the widows of its employees as was the case with the widow of the late Pandit Narendra Nath Kaul.[42] The government also gave appointment to the widows, and confirmed those appointments which were made by Mahraja Pratap Singh.[43] The government gave menial allowance to the female employees of the Jammu Municipality.[44]

The females were appointed in the *Zenana Deorhi*.[45] The Maharaja gave orders to appoint widows on the female establishment of the palace.[46] They were also granted leave etc.[47]

The wives and widows of a foreign nationality married to a State Subject were recognised as State Subjects and were granted State Subject Certificates.[48]

The Government in compliance with the Women Convention of 1930 held under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation at Geneva issued orders to the effect that women would not be employed in underground works and this condition was binding on all future mining leases.[49]

The cases of abduction of women from Kashmir province to the British territory for purposes of prostitution were brought to the notice of the government.[50] The government took actin against scme notorius traffickers in Srinagar under Section 108-A-CR, P. Code.[51]

The Census Of India

The Census of India for the period under study provides an authentic record of literacy in the city of Srinagar and Kashmir.[52] It is a ten-yearly record. At the beginning of our period, in the city of Srinagar, the total number of literates was 8326, in which the number of males was 8276 and that of females was 50.[53]

In 1911, the census has recorded number of literates for each sex. It report:

> From the point of view of education, Kashmir is the most backward part of India. The total number of literate persons is less than 65 thousand and their proportion per mile is only 38 in the case of males and one in that of females.[54]

The 1921 Census records:

> The local distribution of literacy among females closely follows that of the males; on an average there is one literate female to over 15 literate males. The proportion of literate women to the total female population aged 5 and over, is 3 per thousand. Female education among women is negligible.

Under the 1921 Census, neither a Hindu nor a Muslim female knew English, but a Sikh woman was literate in English.[55]

Census Report for the year 1931 for Kashmir Province says:

> For 114, 807 male literates there are only 9,078 female literates in the State which means that for every hundred male literates only 8 female literates are to be found. This is not a very good state of affairs though comparison with 1921 figure reveals an increase of 127 percent in the ranks of literate females.[56]

Following table shows the number of female literates in 1921 and 1931.[57]

Kashmir Province	Female literates In 1931	Female literates in 1921	Percentage of increase
	1,141	1,175	65

Under the last census in 1941 during our period of study, the percentage of literate females was 46.27, whereas that of the males was 53.73.[58]

GOVERNMENT REPORTS

(i) Sharp Report

The Photostat copy of the Sharp report is in the State Archives of Srinagar. It is a note on the Education of Jammu and Kashmir State written by Mr. H. Sharp, the then Education Commissioner with the Government of India. He submitted Report in 1916 A.D. after visiting all the educational, technical and training institutions in the State. He recommended some suggestions which were accepted by the Maharaja but the Education Department was too slow and tardy in implementing it. All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference criticised the Government for its indifference.[59]

(ii) Glancy Commission

His Highness appointed a Commission under the presidentship of Mr. B. J. Glancy of the political Department of the Government of India with four non-official representatives of Hindus and Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir Provinces as members to inquire into the grievances of the different communities. The Commission among other things made recommendations for the Education of women.[60]

(iii) Ganga Nath Report

In July 1943, His highness Maharaja Hari Singh appointed a Commission of Enquiry, under the Presidentship of R.B. Ganganath, Chief Justice of the State High Court, to formulate a policy for the future evolution of an organised scheme for the administration of J&K. It consisted of principally non-official members of the Praja Sabha and others representing different interests and communities.[61].

It is a voluminous report dealing in detail with every aspect of the administration.

> Social and Economic conditions appear to have combined to relegate the female sex to a position of definite inferiority and therefore the number of females in independent occupation is very small. This is

> also reflected in almost a complete absence of consciousness among them. Their franchise compares unfavourably with that of males.[62]

About the pardah system, polygamy and child marriage, the Report says that these were not widely prevalent in Kashmir. The menace of child marriage in a very small proportion, however, still was haunting the society in spite of the Infant Marriage Act of 1929.

It gives yearwise figures of educated girls from 1927 A.D. to 1941 A. D. It recommends the training of women teachers to accelerate the female education. Again, it says:

> On the whole women have not taken any prominent part in public life, though of late they have been asserting themselves in certain restricted affairs.[63]

The most interesting feature of the Report was that all the members either withdrew themselves in the middle or refused to sign it, and it only bears the signature of the President of the Commission.[64]

National Conference's New Kashmir

This Charter of Rights was prepared to establish an egalitarian society in Kashmir. It has a section titled Women's Charter which aims at imparting women political, economic, social, legal, educational and cultural rights to enable, "them just and rightful place in society, and her cooperation in the mighty and responsible task of nation-building".[65]

No social change in the status of women could have taken place if the public consciousness towards it had not been aroused.[66].

Unpublished Manuscripts

Tara Chand Wazir's autobiography, though mainly important on account of a detailed and authentic material on sericulture industry in Kashmir (as he was the Director, Sericulture, J&K Government), throws ample light on the social system of the Pandits (Hindus).

Ghunwanti's Diary contains songs which throw light on the customs, dress, social evils like dowry etc. of the Pandits. She crossed 101 years, and kept the book guarded by herself. It is in Kashmiri language written in *Devanagari* script.

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14

Kashmir under Alien Rule (1586-1947) Struggle for Secular Identity

Saif-ud-din Soz

Kashmiris are fortunate in possessing a history of 5000 years which makes them unique in many respects; they can take genuine pride over ancient history and culture. As J.P. Ferguson says in his book, *Kashmir,"* It (Kashmir) is distinguished as being the only country possessing an ancient Sanskrit historical records."

The original inhabitants, ;the Nagas and the Pishachas, were already in conflict with each other. Aryans came later to add to the strife and make it triangular. The history of the origin of Nagas is shrouded in mystery and nothing is known definitely about them. But, it is accepted beyond doubt that Nagas were the original inhabitants of Kashmir, and Kashmiris built their cultural tradition on the habits and customs of Nagas. Yet the Kashmiri language owes its origin to the language of Pishachas which is apparently a strange phenomenon.

Many a historical event has not been put to the test of unbiased research, and settled as facts. Buddhists and Jews are singled out as people who exercised tremendous influence on Kashmir history and culture. While Buddhist influence is discernible through evidence in historical records and archives, the influence that Jews exercised is not appreciated widely.

Khawaja Nazir Ahmed contends in his book *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (1952) that Moses came to Kashmir and died there 1271 years before Christ. He identified his grave at a village called Boot. He also holds that Jesus Christ, too, came to Kashmir and is buried at Rozabal at Khanyar in Srinagar (Kashmir). It has been authoritatively said by many that Buddha also came to Kashmir to spread his message

Whether Moses, Jesus and Buddha came to Kashmir or not, one thing is very clear through historical and archival evidence that the Buddhists and Jews have left indelible imprint on the life of Kashmiris. Kashmir has experienced situations of strife throughout its long span of history but the kind of struggle they had to undergo against the alien rule starting with Akbar's annexation of Kashmir in 1586 was unprecedented. Kashmiris fought a valiant battle for freedom for 361 years. It was a relentless and fierce battle which continued from one generation to another irrespective of the fact whether the masters were Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus.

History has not been written in an unbiased manner since 1586 so that the average Kashmiri could comprehend why Kashmiris lost independence and came under the slavery of Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras, successively.

The last native rulers of Kashmir were the Chaks who were, despite so many failings, great patriots. Mughals were greatly afraid of them. When prominent citizens like Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daood Khaki approached Akbar for invading Kashmir, Mughals had already been waging a war for fifty years to annex Kashmir but to no avail.

It so happened that when the Kashmiri ruler Sultan Hassan Shah died in 1484 AD, the nobles got divided into two groups. One group favoured Mohammad Shah while the other group supported Fateh Shah. This strife continued so that Mohammad Shah was throned five times and Fateh Shah three times. The warring factions many a time signed truce only to break it. It was a period of civil war in Kashmir.

Mohammad Shah. after being deposed, reached Delhi to seek support from Sikander Shah Lodhi who readily agreed,

to satisfy his own greed to capture Kashmir. Mohammad Shah had hardly arrived at Rajouri when Fateh Shah was deserted by his nobles who welcomed Mohammad Shah provided he sent back Lodhi's army which he did with apparent tact, politeness and gratefulness.

Resistance to Mughal Invasions

When Babar established his rule in Hindustan, he cast his covetous eyes on Kashmir thereafter. The first attack on Kashmir took place in Babar's time but the attacking Mughal army met its crushing defeat at Nowshehra. After this event the Mughals attacked again in support of Ibrahim Shah and tried to establish their hegemony on Kashmir but Babar's brother Mirza Kamran suffered a great defeat at the hands of Kashmiris. The most unfortunate aspect of Kashmir's history is that a full account of heroic battles Kashmiris fought against the Mughals is not available in great detail because history came to be written in an organised manner only during and after Mughal conquest of Kashmir.

The eventual conquest of Kashmir by the Mughals came through deceit and not by any superior skill in warfare. The last Kashmiri ruler Yusuf Shah Chak got summons from Akbar for presenting himself before him. Around that time Yuqub Chak (Yusuf Shah's son) was already in Akbar's Durbar for some time. When he got wind of Akbar's design, he left for Kashmir stealthily and met his father. Akbar got infuriated and asked Raja Baghwan Das to attack Kashmir with an army of fifty thousand. The Mughals faced rout at a place near present Uri. But then, Bhagwan Das sent his emissary to Yusuf Shah saying that Akbar never wanted to annexe Kashmir and, therefore, it would be in his (Yusuf's) interest if he presented himself before Akbar. Yusuf Shah's Prime Minister Mirza Muqeem who had already been purchased by the Mughals, counselled him to do so. Yusuf Shah, without consulting anybody else, joined Bhagwan Das and accompanied him to Akbar. But Kashmiris continued to fight against Mughals till Bhagwan Das assured them that Yusuf Shah had not been taken as a captive and his meeting with Akbar was meant to bring peace to Kashmir.

When Yusuf Shah arrived in Delhi, he came to know that the promises made to him by Bhagwan Das were not to be honoured. Bhagwan Das was so shocked over Akbar's refusal to honour his (Bhagwan Das's) commitments to Yusuf Shah, that he committed suicide.

Yusuf Shah was first jailed for two years and then on the intervention of Man Singh, was made commander of 5000 soldiers in Bengal. Soon he died at Biswak in Bihar. It is only recently that his grave was located and tributes were paid to him as one of the greatest patriots Kashmir had ever produced.

Yaqub Shah continued to rule Kashmir and issued his own currency. But he got involved in Sunni-Shia fend so much so that he became unmindful of the Mughals. The assassination of Sunni Mufti-Azam, Qazi Moosa triggered a wave of hatred against him. It was around this time that two prominent Kashmiris, Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daood Khaki, approached Akbar to annexe Kashmir to the Mughal empire. The Mughals invaded again through Pir Panchal. Yaqub Shah fought a valiant battle, but due to the treachery of his nobles who were divided, he accepted defeat and fled to Kishtwar.

Akbar's General, Mirza Qasim Khan Mir Bahriya, arrived in Srinagar after enormous bloodshed. Kashmiris did not cooperate with him who let loose a reign of terror which made Kashmiris look to Yaqub Chak who came back and started ruling Kashmir again. But he wanted to wreak a vengeance on those who had deserted him in the earlier battle against the Mughals at Herpur. This led to his second withdrawal to Kishtwar. Qasim Khan could not stabilize his rule which was at best confined to Srinagar only. The rural Kashmir continued to remain sympathetic to Yaqub Shah. Kashmiris fought another battle at Gaasu village where hundreds of the Mughal army were killed. Kashmiris continued to fight the Mughals within Kashmir for eleven months but ultimately the Mughals gained a sure foothold primarily because of internal feuds and disunity among the nobles.

Yaqub Shah remained active in battle till he was persuaded by Akbar to accept a Jagir of Rupees twenty Thousand

in Bihar. He accepted the Jagir reluctantly. According to Baharistan-e-Shahi, he was poisoned by Qasim Khan soon after and was buried near his father's grave in Biswak.

Kashmiris did not remain contented under Mughal rule as the Mughals looked at Kashmiris with mistrust and adopted two ways to subjugate them completely; one was to keep them divided and the other was to keep people of Srinagar engaged in constructing a massive wall around Srinagar city. That was also a remarkable measure to create employment.

Afghan Rule

The Mughal rule in Kashmir was followed by Afghan rule for a period of sixty seven years from 1752 to 1819. It was under Ahmad Shah Durrani that Kabul became the centre of authority for Kashmir. He was known for his taste for brutalities. Since Afghans knew their term was going to be short they felt insecure, and tried to collect as much wealth as they could. During their rule Kashmiris remained terrorised. Twenty-six Governors were sent by Kabul to Kashmir by turns but they were without exception, cruel and remorseless rulers.

One of the things the Afghans did was to destroy the gardens and mansions built by the Mughals. While Asad Khan was described as the most cruel of the Afghan governors, Ata Mohammad Khan was rated as a comparatively better of the worst governors. George Forster's visit fell during the rule of Asad Khan. We have, therefore, an eyewitness account of the cruelties committed by Asad Khan against Kashmiris.

As J.P. Ferguson records in his book *Kashmir,* " Unable to secure relief from such tyranny by their own efforts, the Kashmiris naturally turned elsewhere and appealed to the Punjab ruler Ranjit Singh to come to their help. In 1814 a Sikh army attempted an invasion by the Pir Panjal route, but was repulsed. A further personal appeal to Ranjit Singh by Birbal Dhar, a Brahmin who managed to escape from Srinagar to Lahore, resulted in another expedition by the Sikhs. Diwan Chand, the most competent Punjabi General, was in command of the Sikh force which in 1819 expelled the Afghans and brought Kashmir under the rule of the Sikhs."

The misrule of Afghans in which Kashmiris suffered immense misery is expressed best by a poet who said:

Purseedum Aaz Kharabe-ye Gulshan
Ze Baghban;
Afghan Kasheed Wa Guft Ki
Afghan Kharat Kard.

I asked the gardemer as to
why the garden was desolate;
He raised a lament and said that
The garden (Kashmir) was destroyed
by Afghans.

It was during the Afghan rule that a prominent Kashmiri Muslim, Abdul Qudoos Gojwari, made the supreme sacrifice of laying down his life for the sake of his Kashmiri Pandit friend. When Birbal Dhar, who had earned the wrath of the last Afghan governor Azim Khan due to some allegations of misappropriation in revenue collections, fled from Kashmir to personally request Maharaja Ranjit Singh to conquer Kashmir, he left his wife and daughter-in-law under the care of his trusted friend Abdul Qudoos Gojwari. It was no other person than Birbal Dhar's own son-n-law who reported the matter to the governor Azim Khan. Abdul Qudoos Gojwari was got killed along with his family members by Azim Khan. Birbal Dhar's wife committed suicide and his daughter-in-law was abducted.

When Sikhs conquered Kashmir in 1819 Birbal Dhar was given a prominent position and was put in charge of the revenue collection. Once in full command, the Sikhs started terrorising Kashmiri Muslims. On one occasion the Sikh general Phul Singh came close to destroying the historic Shah Hamdan mosque in 1845. But it was Birbal Dhar who dissuaded Sikhs from committing such a heinous crime.

The most prominent Kashmiri poet of modern times, late Mahjoor, took pride while remembering this period of communal harmony, and addressed Kashmiris in one of his famous Kashmiri poems, around 1947:

"Kur Batus Peth Zoo Fida Qudoos Gojwari,
Az Timai Kathe Yaad Paeyu Pana Waen;
Raech Sirij Kakan Mussalman Gobrae Greinz,
Dil Tithai Paet Mila Naeyu Pana Waen."

"It is for a Bata (Kashmiri Pandit) that Abdul Qadoos Gojwari laid his life; Today, you (Hindus and Muslims) should remember these events of togetherness. And it was Rajkak (Birbal Dhar's son) who treated Muslims as his own children; Today, you should seek union of hearts as you had done then."

According to J.P. Ferguson, Ranjit Singh had a keen desire to visit Kashmir. He had said: "would that only once in my life I could enjoy the delight of wandering through the gardens of Kashmir fragrant with almond blossoms and of sitting on the fresh green turf". Ranjit Singh however, died without fulfilling his dream.

It is a tragedy that the land that Ranjit Singh longed to see once in his life was plundered by his governors. The twenty-seven years of his rule over Kashmir was a period of terrible atrocities. It was during that rule that prayers were stopped in Jama Masjid Srinagar and a large number of Muslims was done to death on the false allegation of killing cows.

Muslims expressed resentment by non-cooperation with the administration. In response to this resentment, governors continued to be changed. During the short span of 27 years, ten Governors had to be sent to Kashmir.

In addition to the cruelties at the hands of Sikh Administrator, Kashmiris suffered immense natural calamities such as floods and famines. Thousands of Kashmiris had to leave Kashmir and the Valley got depopulated. As Ferguson records "The main passion of the Sikhs was avarice." The people were, as Moorcroft writes, "exhorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers".

Dogra Rulers

Before discussing the governance of Dogra rulers, it is necessary to understand how Kashmir passed into their

hands. The Dogra brothers, Gulab Singh, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, contributed towards strengthening of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's empire. They belonged to a Rajput family of Jammu and had joined at very low levels in Ranjit Singh's army. They rose to the highest positions as commanders and Ministers at the Sikh Durbar.

While Gulab Singh was made Raja of Jammu, his brother Dhyan Singh continued at the Sikh Durbar. Subsequently when two legitimate successors of Ranjit Singh got killed in an accident, Ranjit Singh's son Sher Singh ascended the throne. In the prevailing uncertainty, Sher Singh felt insecure while other Sikh leaders indulged in intrigue. One of them Ajit Singh murdered both Sher Singh and Dhyan Singh. Gulab Singh's brother Suchet Singh had died while fighting against a rival claimant for the throne.

Of the Jammu brothers only Gulab Singh was now left. While anarchy prevailed at Lahore, the Sikh ruler became hostile to Gulab Singh. Though an attack on Jammu failed, he (Gulab Singh) had to pay a fine of sixty-eight lakhs of rupees. Within a year, the position reversed and Sikhs turned against the British for which they needed the help of Gulab Singh who agreed rather reluctantly to become their minister to negotiate a settlement with the British.

In the treaty that followed, the Sikh Government at Lahore was recognized and certain Sikh territory with a war indemnity of 150 lakhs of rupees was ceded to the British East India Company. This agreement was followed by a separate treaty with Gulab Singh at Amritsar by which the mountainous country between Ravi and Indus was transferred to him and his heirs against a payment of seventy-five lakhs of rupees to the British. This territory they had ceded was the territory that had been ceded by the Lahor Durbar to the British. Hence the illegitimate treaty called treaty of Amritsar was signed in March 1846.

The severest condemnation of the treaty came from Robert Thorp who wrote in his *Cashmere Misgovernment* in 1870, "For purposes entirely selfish, we deliberately sold millions of human beings into absolute power of one of the most vora-

cious, cruel and unprincipled of men that ever sat upon a throne. The British Government committed an act of gross injustice in forcing the rule of Gulab Singh upon a reluctant people."

Maharaja Gulab Singh started his rule of Kashmir with the foremost consideration of collecting money, through means fair or foul. As Cunningham writes in his History of the Sikhs, "He will indeed, deceive an enemy and take his life without hesitation and in the accumulation of money he will exercise many suppressions".

Ferguson testifies, "It was said of him that any of his subjects could secure his attention even though he was surrounded by a throng of people, by holding up a rupee and shouting 'Maharaja, a petition.' He would at once make for the money and having secured it, would then fulfil his part by hearing the case and giving his decision."

To Gulab Singh goes the credit of introducing the system of 'Begar' or forced labour. Young and old were dragged like slaves out of their huts, against their will, to carry loads for the officials and the army. They had sometimes to trudge for months and perish due to hunger and thirst or they died of cold on high mountain passes.

Since Gulab Singh wanted more and more money to fill his coffers, he imposed unbearable taxes on shawl weavers. So severe was the hardship of shawl weavers due to proverty that they rose in revolt in 1865. This is considered by some to be one of the most organised uprising of workers anywhere during that period. On the historic day of April 20, 1865 Kirpa Ram, the Dogra governor, wanted to crush the uprising with an iron hand under the instructions from Raja Ranbir Singh. The army quelled the rebellion and scores of Kashmiris fell dead who were secretly buried. Even though news about the suppression of rebellion was blacked out, the British came to know and felt alarmed.

During Ranbir Singh's time, the people of Kashmir did not only suffer the tyranny of the ruler, but faced natural calamities like famines, floods, earthquakes and fires also. The worst

famine occurred in 1877 during which countless Kashmiris fled to places outside Kashmir. Fearing that the migration of population would spread ill-will against the ruling dynasty, many of the migrating people were ruthlessly beaten back to starvation in the Valley. Eighteen members of a Muslim Community were drowned in the Wullar lake on a particular day. A prominent Kashmiri Pandit leader Hargopal Khasta sent a secret despatch to the British in 1878 lodging a complaint on the atrocities against the members of the Muslim community, particularly the event of drowning eighteen persons in the Wullar Lake.

The Maharaja got information about this despatch and Hargopal Khasta was arrested and chained in Bahu Fort (Jammu) along with his brother Janki Nath. In the meantime, the British responded to the secret information and the two brothers were ordered to be released. Khasta's sacrifice for his Muslim bretheren proved to be a glorious example of the fact that the Muslims and Pandits together strengthened Kashmiri identity on secular lines.

Kashmiris continued their struggle against Dogra rule during Maharaja Pratap Singh's time and Maharaja Hari Singh's time.

The freedom movement in Kashmir in a modern and sustained form started in 1931, when a large Muslim demonstration held before the central jail on 13 July was fired upon by the police resulting in several dead and wounded. The movement took an organised form in 1932 when Sheikh Mohamaad Abdullah and his colleagues formed Muslim Conference. Initially it was a movement for a fair share for Muslim community in government services but soon it became a full-fledged political movement for a responsible government which attracted attention from many parts in India and abroad.

In 1939 Muslim Conference was converted into Jammu and Kashmir National Conference which opened its doors to non-Muslims also. In May 1946, it asked the Maharaja to quit Kashmir.

It was Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masoodi, General Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, who explained to the world in 1946 the objectives of the Quit Kashmir movement. When he appeared as an accused before the judge, Indu Bhushan, at Srinagar on 14 October 1946, he pleaded his own case and deposed in the court that the date of his crime was not the one when he delivered a seditious speech at Hazaratbal but went back to the day when Akbar had annexed Kashmir to the Mughal empire four centuries ago. Since then Kashmiris had been committing the crime of sedition attributed to them every day. Quoting from historical records, he said Kashmiri Muslims were not fighting against Dogra rulers because they were Hindus. They had fought against Muslims and Pathans and Sikh Punjabis also as all of them were invaders, for a long span of 360 years until 1946.

Maulana Masoodi lumped all these centuries together and characterised them as a period of imperialism.

The Maulana's deposition before the judge is perhaps the best treatise on Kashmir's assertion of secular identity during a period of subjugation under Mughal, Pathan, Sikh and Dogra rulers.

The most interesting aspect of Kashmiriat is that even though most of the Kashmiri Pandits remained part of the establishment and manned the administration during these centuries of alien domination, due to various historical reasons, including the reason of being an educated class, there are shining examples of how Kashmiri Pandits strengthened Kashmiri identity. In fact the identity of Kashmir would be incomplete without the contribution the Pandits made over centuries.

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15

Kashmiriyat: The Mystique of an Ethnicity

Riyaz Punjabi

The eerie silence at sunset was broken by the call of the *muezzin,*inviting believers for evening prayers; this was followed by the tolling of bells from a temple; and then silence again descended on the lake. The guests on the deck of the Lake Club, holding their glasses filled with Indian spirits, were transfixed by the scene in front of them. The clean lake waters rippled and sang a lullaby due to a light breeze blowing across the waters. The motionless, mysterious *Hari Parbat* hillock seemed to stand sentinel over the waters of the lake, with the long Pir Panchal range of mountains rising majestically in the background.

The *Hari Parbat* is the epicentre of Kashmir-geographically, mythologically and spiritually. On the north-east of this hill is the shrine of the great Kashmiri saint, Sheikh Hamzah Makhdoom; the south-west part of the hillock is the abode of Chakreshwari Devi (Sharada); and in the foothills is the Gurudwara Chhatti Padshahi where in the seventeenth century the sixth guru of the Sikhs, Hargovind, had spread the message of Guru Nanak. This hill has become a focal point where people of diverse faiths, coming from many directions, converge on one point to provide a living instance of the adage that ways might be different, but they lead to one goal.

Our visitors to Kashmir found themselves completely bewildered by the ethnic profile of the people. Their attitudes

and behaviour, customs and beliefs, places and monuments, rivers and lakes, each holds a mystery. Through the vicissitudes of history, the Kashmiri people have evolved an identity –a peculiar identity–which has granted them a specific mould of ethnic particularism.

The guests at the Boat Club commented on the clean waters of the Nagin Lake, and recalled the beautiful springs which were guarded by the local villagers. In order to deter youngsters from disturbing the sanctity of these places, villagers have coined myths and legends which, more often than not, border on superstition. The local Muslims have declared: "fish in a pond and a spring forbidden unto them", a dictum unknown in Muslim theology elsewhere. The rationale seems to be to keep these springs and lakes clean and serene. In Kashmiri language there is a famous saying: "fish in a spring is *Hallal* only to the extent of seeing it." The spring is called *nag* in the Kashmiri language; and it is through the *nag* that we unravel the complex web of Kashmiri ethnicity.

In Kashmiri, *nag* stands for both 'spring' as well as 'snake'. Thousands of years ago, when the *Sati-Sar* lake was drained of its water by *Rishi* Kashyap and the lake-demon was annihilated, the Nagas became the first inhabitants of Kashmir. They followed the customs and practices mentioned in the *Nilamatapurana,* by worshipping 'nag' (snakes); and the 'nag' (springs) had great sanctity for them because these were supposed to be abodes of the snake-gods. Even today, the people of Kashmir believe that springs are the abode of snakes who are supposed to guard these springs.

The advent of the Aryans in Kashmir led to conflict and tension between them and the Nagas. Initially, the Aryans made attempts to absorb the Nagas culturally; but having failed to do so, they started making compromises with the Nagas by making adjustments with their culture, beliefs, traditions and customs. This laid down the foundations of the tradition of fusion and assimilation in Kashmiri society. The Aryans included snake-gods in their scriptures and accorded to them the status granted to deities. It was not difficult for them to ensure the sanctity of springs associated with varied

snake gods. Thus, in the scriptures, we have a *nag* around the neck of Siva; Vishnu sleeping over *Anant Nag* and sometimes even appearing in the form of *Anant Nag* and; *Shesh Nag* becomes the 'spring of life'. Kalhana, the famous author of *Rajatarangini* (written in 1148-1149 AD), mentions that Kashmir is a place which is guarded by great *nags like Nila Nag, Sankha Nag* and *Padma Nag.*

This acclaim of *nags* as serpent gods and the sanctity accorded to *nags* (springs) by making them part of Aryan theology became a permanent feature of the religious and cultural ethos of the Kashmiri Hindu which has withstood the vicissitudes of time. Even today, the Kashmiri Pandits remember *nag* in one or the other way, be it while performing *puja* or while remembering the departed souls on specific occasions. Again, in this context, *Shesh Nag* becomes more sacred for them than the Ganga. This has kept Kashmiri brahmins rooted to their soil, and made them distinct from the preponderant majority of their co-religionists in the subcontinent.

The Pishachas are another tribe who came in large numbers and settled down in Kashmir. They are said to have outnumbered the Nagas and Aryans, who harassed them perpetually because they considered the Pishachas to be racially inferior. However, in due course of time, the Pishachas also got assimilated in Kashmiri society. They are believed to have introduced mutton-eating and made it a popular practice among Nagas as well as Aryans. Much later, Kashmiri Brahmins had to write a *shastra* to justify this practice of mutton-eating. Beef, however, was abhorrent to Hindus as well as Muslims of Kashmir and continues to be so even today. Kashmir is the only place in the whole of India where cow-slaughter is a penal offence, and has the complete approval of a society where the overwhelming majority are Muslims.

Buddhist Imprints

On every Friday afternoon one can hear the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran reverberate across the placid waters of the Dal Lake. The verses, chanted in unison by the vast congregation, take on the typical rhythms of the Kashmiri

speech patterns. From a distance, it is often difficult to decide whether it is a recitation of verses from the Holy Quran or a *havana* being performed by Brahmins.

On the banks of the Dal Lake, facing eastwards, is situated the magnificent Hazratbal shrine, also known as *Madina-i-Sani* or Madina, the second. The shrine was originally a pagoda-shaped building which was dismantled in the early Seventies by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the former Chief Minister and also President of the Muslim Awqaf Trust. In its place, a magnificent new building with a large white dome has been constructed. Muslims throng the shrine in large numbers and on specific occasions the relic is displayed to the devotees after they have offered prayers. Thousands of hands rise in reverence, chanting *darood* or salutations to the Prophet Mohammad with mist in their eyes.

The preserving of relics of prophets and saints and displaying them publicly is a unique practice, prevalent among Muslims of Kashmir alone. In the Hazratbal shrine, reverently placed in a milky glass tube, is the sacred hair of the Prophet Mohammad. Relics include robes or other dresses worn by the saints, sticks carried by them and even household items used by them. All these items are placed with great reverence in *astans* which are usually places where these saints are buried or where they have spent some part of their lives. The relics are displayed to the public on the occasion of an *urs* or festival, coinciding usually with the birth or death anniversary of the saint. A marble stone with a large footprint imprinted on it is preserved at Asar-i-Sharif, Janab Sahib at Soura in Srinagar. This footprint is known as *Qadam-i-Rasul* or footprint of the Prophet Mohammad. Chroniclers and historians have mentioned that earlier the same relic was known as *Vishnu-pada* or the footprint of Lord Vishnu.

The preservation and display of relics has been a custom among the Buddhists of Kashmir well before the first century AD. The begging bowl of the Buddha was preserved in a convent in Srinagar. It is believed to have been broken by a marauder called Mihirakula who became the king of Kashmir in the sixth century AD. There is also a legend about the tooth

of Buddha being preserved in Kashmir, which was subsequently lost.

Lord Buddha is reported to have said: "The land of Kashmir is the best abode of *dhyana* and *samagra* (contemplation and meditation)". It is an important historical fact that liberalism and the assimilative character of Kashmiri society has never allowed fanaticism and orthodoxy to gain an edge. Therefore, it is no wonder that the free thinkers among Buddhists, during the reign of Emperor Ashoka, led by Maahantika settled down in Kashmir. It is reported that accompanied by five hundred *arhants,* he settled on the banks of Vitasta or the Jehlum river. This group is believed to have laid the foundations of the *Mahayana* school of Buddhism. These people also came in direct conflict with the Aryans. However, the Greek ruler Menander is reported to have been defeated in a discussion by the great Buddhist scholar Nagasena. This particular episode appears to have established the tradition of dialogue and debate among the people belonging to different faiths in Kashmir. Thus, Nagarjuna, titled as *Bodhisattva,* who lived in the enchanting jungles of *Sadarhadvana* (the present Harwan), is reported to have invited scholars for debates and triumphed over many learned Brahmins in discussions on Buddhism.

Buddhism became the prevalent faith of the people because the Pishachas embraced this faith in large numbers. The Kushana king, Kanishka, provided official patronage to Buddhism. It is reported that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. The final resolutions of this Council, rendered in 300,000 verses, were engraved on copper plates and preserved. For the last fifty years, archaeologists have tried unsuccessfully to locate these copper plates in Kashmir.

While passing through the busy bazars of downtown Srinagar or even in remote towns and villages in other parts of Kashmir, one can come across huge pagoda-shaped buildings reminiscent of the Buddhist period. Most of these buildings are now shrines associated with one or other muslim saint or seer. Notable among these buildings which survived the vicissitudes of time and the tyranny of zealots, are the Shah

Hamadan Mosque situated on the banks of Vitasta or the Jehlum river as it is now known, Ziarat Dastagir Sahib in Khanyar, and Ziarat Nund Rishi at Chanar Shariff. All these structures appear to have been monasteries at some point of time; they were probably given as a gift by king Renchan who converted from Buddhism to Islam in the fourteenth century AD. It is reported that Buddhists converted to Islam in large numbers during this period.

The famous Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, came to Kashmir in 631 AD and found a large number of *viharas* and *stupas* built around Srinagar. He also came across several great Buddhist scholars. Visuddhasima and Jinabandhu were considered great authorities on *Mahayana,* whereas Sugatasimha and Vasumitra were masters of the *Sarvastivada,* and Jinatrata was the last word on the *Mahasanghika* school of Buddhist thought.

The Buddhist *viharas* and monastaries were run by an institution called *Agrahara.* All donations, gifts and offerings were regulated and utilized through this particular institution. The *Agrahara* disappeared to be replaced by another institution called *Awqaf.* The nearest translation of the term would be 'Trust' in English. The *Awqaf* has the same functions and it performs the same role for Muslims as the *Agrahara* performed for the Buddhists. The administration of mosques and shrines, properties attached to them and profits realized from such properties, donations and offerings, are all regulated through the *Awqaf* in Kashmir. The physical structures and buildings might have changed their names from one period of history to another, but it is not very easy to demolish or replace the social structures, the beliefs and attitudes imbeded in the consciousness of the people. Thus, the institution of *Mir-Waiz* or Chief Missionary, is a very important and unique one to be found only among Muslims of Kashmir and in no other Muslim society. Its parallels may, of course, be found in Hindu or Buddhist societies.

Buddhism declined in Kashmir during the sixth and seventh centuries AD. This was partly due to the oppressive policies of some rulers who had developed an antagonistic

attitude towards Buddhism and its followers, and partly due to the decay in Buddhist society itself.

Trika Shaivism

The resurgence of Buddhism in the later periods of Kashmir's history was accompanied with a silent tension which had crept up between Buddhism and Hinduism. However, behind this tension there also grew a deep understanding between the two philosophies at the intellectual level. This understanding resulted in the Kashmir Shaivism or *Trika* philosophy which held sway not only in the Kashmir of that period, but continues to provide a common bond to the people of diverse faiths even today.

In the *Rajatarangini,* the chronicler Kalhana directs his ire against King Harsha (1089-1101 AD) by describing him as *truska,* that is, a Muslim. Some scholars maintain that *truska* has been used to denote "a person who has deviated from the path". King Harsha demolished a large number of temples and plundered the wealth stored in them. Some historians maintain that he did so because he was a *Trika* believer and, therefore, against idol worship in the temples; while others argue that he did so because he was forced by the exigency of the deficits of the imperial treasury. At this time Kashmir Shaivism or *Trika* philosophy had reached its zenith, and it invited the attention of scholars beyond the frontiers of Kashmir.

If one accepts Hari Parbat as the primeval focus of Kashmir's cultural and spiritual traditions, the mysteries of Chakreshwari temple on the hill would need to be unravelled. In this process, it would appear that *Trika* philosophy is a extension of the earlier spiritual experience of the sages and saints in the Valley. Although the Chakreshwari temple has survived for centuries, there is no particular deity enshrined in it; instead, there is a large, oversized stone placed within the precincts of the temple. On a closer look, this stone appears to be of the shape of *Har,* the *mynah* in Kashmiri language. On this *mynah*-shaped stone are inscribed some mysterious diagrams which are yet to be decoded. Although no attention has

been paid to this mysterious stone, it certainly suggests that *mantra* or the spoken word, and *yantra* or the diagram were powerful means to transmit *gyana* (knowledge) in the Valley's early history.

Pratyabhijna, as Ksemendra puts it, is the identification of one's own self with the pure and supreme consciousness. This pure consciousness is the source and essence, the beginning and the end; the experience of merging with it results in one's own union with the entire creation. This is the essence of *Trika*. In fact, Kashmiri Shaivisim or *Trika* represents a fusion and has elements of both *Advaita Vedanta and Madhyamaka Buddhism*. It lays emphasis on *Parma Siva*, which is beyond human knowledge and articulation, and which can be realized and experienced only through mystical intuition. Abhinava Gupta, who was a great exponent of *Trika* philosophy, does not consider the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* as immutable; nor does he consider the world as mere *Maya*. He placed experience in the first order, then reason, and finally divine knowledge, in the course of realization of the ultimate reality.

Rishi Order of Islam

All faiths and beliefs which are based on monotheistic thought come within the fold of Islam. This is a well-established but lesser known Islamic doctrine. In this context, the fusion between *Trika* and Islam in fourteenth century AD did not pose any problems at any level in the society. Moreover, Islam reached Kashmir through Central Asia. The missionaries, saints and sufis who brought Islam to Kashmir also brought with them the wealth of philosophies which had developed in their respective lands. What distinction, for instance, could they make between monotheistic *Trika* and Islam? Or how was *Pratyabhijna* different from *Wahdat-ul-wajood?* What differentiation could one make between *Hamah-Ost* and *Om-Soham?* The differentiation or distinction, if any, was only that of language. Kashmir *Nirguna* philosophy welcomed the *tassawuf* (mysticism) which had developed in Persia, Central and South Asia. Mansoor-Al-Halaj would not have thought differently if he were in Kashmir at that point of

time. The intermingling of *Trika* Saivism with Islam resulted in the emergence of a new cult which came to be called the *Rishi* cult, a synonym of *Bhakti*. It was through *Rishis* that Islam, in its indigenous form, became the popular faith of the people.

Abul-Fazl, in the *Ain-i-Akbari,* acclaims *Rishis* in these words:

> The most respectable class in this country is that of the *Rishis* who, notwithstanding their need of freedom from the bonds of tradition and custom, are true worshippers of God. They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg, nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees and are generally a source of benefit to the people. They abstain themselves from flesh and meat, and do not marry.

The emperor Jehangir mentions that there were 2000 *Rishis* in the Valley at that time.

The saint-poetess, Lalleshwari, popularly known as *Lalla Ded (Lalla* the mother), became the torch-bearer of the *Rishi* cult in Kashmir. *Lalla* admonished Brahmins for getting trapped in the worship of "this form of stone or the other". Instead, she advised them to bring in "unison their minds with the ultimate reality and the truth would dawn upon them". So powerful was the spiritual status of Lalla that her heir and younger contemporary, the greatest and most revered *Rishi* of Kashmir, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani, popularly known as Nund Rishi expressed his yearning in these words:

> *That Lalla of Padamanpore,*
> *who had drunk the fill of divine nectar;*
> *She was undoubtedly an avatar of ours.*
> *O God! grant me the same spiritual power.*

An amazing spectacle indeed that a devout Muslim *Rishi* should crave for attaining the spiritual status of a *Shaivite* spiritual.

The traditions and beliefs of *Rishis* have been carried forward by saints, sufis, seers and poets from fifteenth century onwards till date. The sufi poets have been the chief exponents of these traditions, and poetry has been an important and powerful medium of transmitting the *Trika* beliefs from one generation to another. One has to believe in some kind of divine knowledge or intuition because most of these saint poets, particularly from the twentieth century, do not seem to have been formally exposed to Vedic or Shastric terminology; Yet they use these terms and symbols with such ease and finesse. They talk about the Vedas, Shastras, Brahma, Rama, Siva Janama with such an expertise that they seem to have undergone the rigour of actually experiencing it.

Ahad Zarger is a well-known contemporary sufi-poet who lives in the Narwara locality of Srinagar city. People from far-off areas come to seek Zarger's healing touch for their physical ailments, or a solution to their wordly problems. One of his poems reads:

Mohammad-radiates light all around
Pujari lost his wits,
While offering flowers,
Iswara showered rain,
Come, let us blow the sankh
around Sankara.
Mohammad-radiates light all around.

There is nothing new in this sentiment. Ahad Zarger's predecessors as well as many of his contemporaries have been sharing their experiences in the same way and expressing themselves in the same vein. The famous sufi poet, Shah Ghafoor, shared his experience in these words:

What do we accomplish
By coming and going,
From one Janama (birth) to another?
I think nothing.
The way out is
'So-ham-Soo' (I am thou).
Explore, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara,
They are all-pervading, the manifest.

Shall thou bear the reality
When it dawns upon thou?

Rahim Sahib, another noted sufi poet, acclaims the greatness of the Shastras in this couplet:

Shastras, I have explored,
I -- the Rahim Sahib, am wearing around,
a Shastra myself,
For Shastra is the crown of believers.

Ironically, Rahim Sahib uses the term *din-dar*-- one who follows *din* or Islam,, that is, a Muslim. Then he emphasizes that *Shastra* is the crown of a *din-dar*.

Shah Qalandar, yet another sufi poet, says:

Dew radiates brightness all around,
Atma (Soul) cannot get out of transmigration,
Siva, O Shah Qalandar, Resembles none.

Asad Parray shares his experience, a wonderful experience indeed, in these words:

Like a yogi I postured myself
in the solitude of vana (jungle),
And reduced my shareer (body) to ashes,
In the process of Prana-Abhyas.

Shamas faqir, a very popular sufi poet, says:
Rig Veda, Yajer Veda, Sam Veda, Athar Veda
My revered guru (teacher) endowed me
with these four Vedas,
And gave unto me,
apparels of a yogi and gyana.

All these poets, some of them living till the twentieth century and some alive even today, are local Kashmiri Muslims. Most of them follow the path of Islamic *Sharia* which is very much evident from their poetry and way of life; and yet they have this strong streak of *Trika* running in their belief system and thought process. These people do not live in caves nor do they comtemplate in the deep jungles of Kashmir. On the other hand, they lead normal lives, meet and

mingle with people, and disseminate their knowledge and beliefs to them, without making much ado about it. Their beliefs do influence the people who come in contact with them and widen their mental horizons. In this process, it adds new colour to their ethnicity.

"It is difficult to distinguish between the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir," wrote the emperor Jehangir. Aurangzeb found the Muslims of Kashmir *be-pir,* that is, a misguided lot. Most of the travelogues written by European travellers on Kashmir in the nineteenth century mention the commonalities in the practices, traditions, and beliefs of the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir.

Kashmiri Roots of Pandits

Kashmiri Pandits, as the Hindus of Kashmir are popularly known, rooted in the soil of Kashmir have created their own traditions, devised their own symbols and developed their own indigenous philosophies. They wrote their own *Vedas* and *Shastras* to guide them in the course of their lives. They had to make a long ardous journey through the plains to reach Gangotri or Haridwar. So they had discovered their own Gangotri at *Gangabal* and their Haridwar at *Shadipur,* and declared these places to be more sacred than those others. They held the religious shrines of India in esteem, but created their replicas in their own native soil. In so doing, they created, culturally, a small subcontinent in Kashmir.

Shankaracharya, the great philosopher and seer, is believed to have come to Kashmir to set the local Brahmins on the right path, who, according to him had deviated from that path. The local Brahmins resisted all his efforts, and instead invited him to accept their philosophy, and to surrender completely before the Goddess Sharada of Hari Parbat. The Legend goes that Shankaracharya fell ill and developed boils all over his body. When all treatment failed, he approached the local Brahmins. They advised him, to chant *mantras* paying obeisance to Sharada. The legend goes that with the recitation of each *mantra,* each boil on his body vanished. He is reported to have laid down prostrate in the Chakreshwari

Temple at Hari Parbat, and declared that Kashmiri Brahmins were great scholars and their philosophy was of the highest order. The Brahmins of the south have a tradition even today to bow towards the north paying their obeisance to 'Sharada Peeth' as Kashmir was then known.

Today, when a Kashmiri Pandit celebrates *Khechi Amyavas* and places *khichri* in a bowl in the attic with the belief that Lord Yaksha, in any form, would come to taste it, he is following a tradition of thousands of years, and one that is mentioned in the *Nilamatapurana.* And let us also not forget that when a bowl full of cooked rice, *bhatta,* is placed before a Muslim, he takes out a portion to be fed to birds or animals.

Till recently, Kashmiri Pandits celebrated *Vyth-e-Truvah* when earthen lamps,placed in grass-rings would be floated in the river *Vitasta* (Jhelum) as a mark of reverence to this river. This custom was based on the praises showered on *Vitasta* in the *Nilamatapurana.*

Mir Shams-ud-Din-Iraqi, a scholar and a saint of the Shia sect, came from Persia to Kashmir in the year 1481 AD. He was "distressed" to see the "way Muslims practised Islam in Kashmir". He made great efforts to "purify" the Muslims and restore the pristine purity, as the historian Mohib-ul-Hassan calls it, of Islam in Kashmir. Alas! his "sincere" efforts created great resentment among the people. He invited their wrath and had to flee from Kashmir in disgust. It is a matter of historical investigation as to how much contribution the activities of this particular zealot made in forcing the local nobles and scholars in inviting Akbar to invade Kashmir. Akbar's rule is believed to mark the beginning of alien rule in Kashmir.

The post-*namaz* activities of Muslims, the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran loudly and in unison, the recitation of couplets composed in Kashmiri language in praise of the Prophet Mohammad, their great reverence of shrines and tombs of sufis and saints, the preservation and display of relics of saints– are all purely Kashmiri Muslim phenomena. These are all links in one long historical chain.

The rule of Islamic jurisprudence have been modified to suit the needs of the Muslims of Kashmir. For instance, adoption is an institute clearly forbidden by Islam; but it is quite prevalent among the Muslims of Kashmir. The adopted son, called the *Pisar-Parwardha* or *Mutbana*, enjoys the same rights and is under the same obligations as a natural son of the appointer. The term *Mutbana* is dervied from the Arabic *Tabana,* which means to adopt another person as one's own son. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court while accepting the plea, in a particular case, that adoption was an un-Islamic institution, expressed its helplessness to do away with it and upheld it as a valid custom. The Court rightly observed that it was for the people to reject it if they felt so. However, this custom continues to be followed.

Similarly, another custom, the inheritance given to a *Dukhtar-I-Khana Nashin,* that is a daughter who does not leave her parental house even after marriage, directly contravenes the Islamic Law of Inheritance. Under local custom, prevalent among Muslims, such a daughter is entitled to a share equivalent to that of a son. Similarly, regarding the Law of Wills, the rules have been modified locally by the Muslims. In order to eliminate the un-Islamic influences on Muslim Law in Kashmir, Jamat-e-Islami, introduced a *Sharia Bill* in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly in 1979 which, however, was rejected by the House by an overwhelming majority.

Kalhana listed five outstanding features of Kashmir: "Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes. Things, that even in heaven are difficult to find, are common here." Several great sanskrit scholars came to this "Sharada-Peeth' to interact with the local scholars who had acquired phenomenal fame and acclaim. They included scholars and poets like Abhinava Gupta, Bilhana, Mammata, Kshemendra, Somadeva and others.

After the twelfth century, great Persian scholars came to Kashmir to interact with local scholars. Persia and Central Asia exerted so much influence on Kashmir during this period that Kashmir was called the *Iran-i-Saghir,* or Iran–the minor. The great persian scholars and poets of this period included

Sheikh Yapkub Sarafi, Baba Dawood Khaki, Akmal Ghani Kashmiri, Mohsin, Malik Hyder, Birbal Kachroo and others. Dara Shukoh translated the *Upanishads* from Persian to Kashmiri. King Zainul Abidin got the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian during his reign. In a later period, however, due to the impact of *Rishis,* Kashmir came to be known as *Rish-Wer,* the abode of *Rishis.*

Historically, three important trends of Kashmiri society are discernible. These trends are a love for scholarship, the traditions of inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue, and the tendency towards assimilation. The last one, sometimes, assumes consensual portents, which makes room for dissent a little difficult.

It may be emphasised here that the ethnicity of a group remains vibrant and harmonious as long as varied elements of such an ethnicity remain inclusive, and none of its edges get sharpened disproportionately. As soon as a particular ethnicity starts becoming exclusive, or any of its edges start getting sharpened, it starts getting diluted and the identity of the group as a whole is placed under strain.

Kashmiriyat Under Strain

In post-Independent Kashmir, the ethnicity of the Kashmiri people and the identity of Kashmir , started identifying themselves with the larger religious majority of India. For various political and economic reasons they abandoned their indigenous beliefs and traditions, and started merging with the traditions and beliefs of India's majority. It is yet another matter that Hinduism in India has thrived more because of its inclusive nature. Any group seeking greater alliance with this religion on the assumption of its exclusive character is under a mistaken belief. It is ironical that Kashmiri Pandits who led the agitation "Kashmir for Kashmiris" in 1928, and forced Maharaja Hari Singh to pass the State Subject Law under which non-Kashmiris were debarred from purchasing non-movable property in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, should now seek greater political and cultural integration between the State and the Union.

The Muslims of Kashmir, partly influenced by events taking place beyond the passes of Banihal and partly by the winds blowing from across the Haji Pir Pass, too are diluting the ethnicity of Kashmir. They appear to have been led to a course where the religious edge of Kashmiri identity in its exclusive form is getting more and more sharpened.

A section of Kashmiri Muslims appear to be living behind a smokescreen, and they seem to be missing the ethnic complexities of the very societies from which they are being prodded to draw the inspiration to lead their lives. The smokescreen has come into existence due to the horrible political developments in the State of Jammu and Kashmir for the last forty years, to which has been added a sustained campaign by a group with a particular political outlook and approach to religion. The machinations of the ruling elite in the State, abetted and aided by the ruling elite at the Centre against the people of Kashmir, has provided a field day to this grouping and made their operation easier. *Kashmiriyat* has been under attack from many directions and different quarters.

The flames were leaping up as if they were leaping towards *Hari Parvat* to swallow it. The reflection of flames in the lake waters made it appear as if the whole lake was burning. In a short while, the Lake Club was razed to the ground. It was the beginning of autumn in the year 1990 AD. Across the lake, two misty eyes were transfixed on the flames. She had just returned from the plains, where her parents lived for many years now. She had refused to take her new-born baby to Varanasi for *mundan*, that is, the ceremony when the head of a new-born baby is shaved for the first time. She had decided with her intimate Muslim friend and neighbour to perform this ceremony in the shrine of Baba Payam-ud-Din, popularly known as Baba Rishi, in Tangmarg, near the famous tourist resort of Gulmarg. Baba Rishi, for hundreds of years, has been attracting people–Hindus and Muslims, urban and rural, rich and poor-- for this particular ceremony. And when she along with her friend reached Baba Rishi's *astan* or shrine, they discovered to their shock and disbelief, that this shrine too had been devastated in a fire "under mysterious circumstances". Was this, too, part of a well-comprehended design to wipe out the vistas of Kashmiri ethnicity?

When any calamity has to befall on the people of Kashmir, the *nag* (spring) at the Kheer Bhawani temple changes its colour from sky-blue to black. The change in the colour of the water is to be seen to be believed. The legend goes that it changed its colour from blue to black in 1947, when tribal raiders from Pakistan attacked Kashmir. *Kashmiriyat* was under attack at that time also. Kheer Bhawani is one of the historic temples of Kashmir, before which, according to sufi poet, Abdul Ahad Zarger, ''other Hindu shrines pale into insignificance''. Amazingly enough, the *samagri* (items used in performing puja) was sold by Muslims inside the compound of this temple. They have been doing it from times immemorial. When elders pass away, the younger ones in the family take over this trade. A Muslim family which manages Amarnath Cave, gets one-third of the offerings as their share of managing the shrine.

The water of the spring at Kheer Bhawani has changed its colour again from pure sky-blue to black. History has witnessed through the ancient and medieval periods, down to modern times, the water in the spring changing its colour. There have been carnages, devastation of centres of social and cultural interaction, and persecution of scholars. Behind all this turmoil have been the attempts to dilute *Kashmiriyat* or the ethnicity of Kashmir, to change its composite character and make it a part of one monolithic identity. These attempts have been made from several directions and have been prompted by diverse interests. However, such is the mystique of this ethnicity that it has withstood all the onslaughts, and each time re-emerged and resurged with great strength and vitality. The *Rishis* have made us believe that it is ordained to be so. The water in this spring at Kheer Bhawani will one day resume its colour of sky-blue once again.

16

5000 Years of Kashmir

Balraj Puri

Kashmir must have existed for much longer than 5000 years. But authentic scientific evidence establishes civilised existence of its people for around this period.

A number of factors are responsible for this unusual longevity and continuity.

Geographically, the paradise on earth has existed in splendid isolation, though internally well-connected. Kashmir is "the largest Valley in the lap of the largest mountains in the world"[1] Ranging from 10,000 to 18,000 feet in height, they enclose a plain of around 1900 square miles, almost uniformly at a height of 5000 feet above the Sea level, 84 miles long and 20 to 25 miles wide.

Every place in it is within a few hours' drive from any other place. The fabled beauty of Kashmir, which poets, writers and travellers from all over the world have described as incomparable, further inspires deep love for the land in the closely linked society.

Kashmir has a homogeneous culture as over 94 per cent of its population are Muslims while over 89 per cent speak Kashmiri as their mother tongue. Kashur -- as the language is called by the Kashmiris -- is one of the oldest spoken and literary languages of modern India. It has over six hundred year-old recorded literary heritage if Lall Ded is considered the earliest Kashmiri poetess. According to Sir George Grierson,

the pioneering authority on Indian languages, it is not of Sanskrit – the mother of all north Indian languages – but of Dardic origin.[2] Encyclopaedia Britannica states that "Kashmiri is neither Iranian nor Indo-Aryan." If this view is correct, Kashmiri does not belong to the family of languages spoken from Dhaka (Bangladesh) to Peshawar (Pakistan), from the eastern end to the western end of the subcontinent. However, G.M.D. Sofi, author of the monumental work *Kashir*, concedes that although Kashmiri language has a Dardic basis, it has been influenced by the Indo-Aryan languages spoken in its Southern parts. He observes: "The original Dardic language has supplied the skeleton, Sanskrit has given it flesh, but Islam has given it life." He also adds, that it is the only Dardic language that has a written literature.

5000 Year Old Antiquity

Again Kashmir is a unique civilizational experminent which can claim, according to Sir Aurel Stein, the translator of the celebrated book of history of Kashmir *Rajatarangini*, "the distinction of being the only region of India which possesses an uninterrupted series of written record of its history."[4] The archaeological excavations at Bourzahama, 15 Km from Srinagar in sixties, establish its antiguity to beyond 3000 BC. Though it was contemporaneous to the Mohenjodaro civilization, perhaps it had some independent features also. The widespread prevalançe of Naga worship before and even after the Buddhist period indicate that the Naga and indigenous tribes lived in Kashmir before the advent of Aryans in the subcontinent. According to James Ferguson, the Nagas were serpent-worshippers, an aboriginal race of Turanian stock inhabiting North India, who were conquerred by Aryans.[5] Durlabavardhna who ruled Kashmir from 627 to 663 AD is stated to be the son of a Naga.[6] Abhinava Gupta, the eminent Kashmiri philosopher, claims the primacy of agamas– religious texts of ancient Kashmir dating between first and fifth-sixth century AD– over the Vedas both in point of time and performance of rituals.[7]

The interaction betwen Vedic and Kashmiri traditions did develop in course of time. But in Kashmir's religious litera-

ture, the supremacy of Shiva over the Vedic supreme god Indra has often been asserted. *Margendre Tantra,* for instance, refers to a legend in which Shiva is regarded as the supreme deity from whom Indra brings the sacred knowledge of *Tantra* to the world, thereby reducing him to a mere communicator of Shiva's knowledge.[8] According to VN Drabu, the pre-Vedic people of Kashmir were admitted to Vedic society 'with distinctive characteristics of their own life at different periods'.[9]

The transition from Naga cults to Buddhism, too, was smooth. According to legends, some Nagas atended the religious seminars of Nagarjuna at Nalanda and impressed by the way he contradicted the Vedic doctrines, invited him to Kashmir. According to Sufi, "on account of his connections with the Nagas, he received the name of Nagarjuna."[10] (Some scholars claim that he was a Kashmiri). He was elevated to the status of Bodhistava. It was under his leadership that the fourth council of Buddhism was held at Harvan near Srinagar in Kashmir in 100 AD where Mahayana school of Buddhism was founded. Influenced by Shaivite-Tantric thought of Kashmir, Buddhism got transformed into its Kashmiri version. Eventually indigenous religious beliefs, Vedic thoughts and Buddhism were synthesised by great Kashmiri philosophers Vasugupta (ninth century AD) and Abhinava Gupta (tenth century AD) into Kashmiri version of Shaivism called Trika philosophy. Influence of Buddhism is discernible in many rituals and customs of Kashmiri Hindus even today.

Islam as Condolidator of Traditions

According to GMD Sufi, Monostic theism of 'Kashmir Shaivism is very near to Islam'. He particularly compares it with the tenet of celebrated Muslim mystic Mansur al Hallaj (858 to 922 AD) who proclaimed "An'l Haq" (I am creative truth).[11] Kashmir thus accepted Islam not as a negation but as a culmination of a proud spiritual heritage. It did not surrender to Islam as a spiritually exhausted personality but greeted it in a friendly embrace. Islam did not come to Kashmir as a faith of conquerors and therefore did not humiliate or hurt its pride. Muslim rule was not an outside import but followed the

conversion of a local ruler. Mass conversion of the people of Kashmir to Islam owes to a unique character that emerged from the soil in the person of Alamdar-i-Kashmir, Shaikh Nooruddin Noorani, popularly called Nund Rishi (14th Century), who became the patron-saint of Kashmir. He translated Islam into Kashmir's spiritual and cultural idiom and converted it into a massive emotional upsurge. Farooq Nazki calls him a Muslim Shaivite. According to Dr. B.N. Pandit, his poetry is a mixture of Shaivism and Sufism.

Proclaiming himself to be the spiritual son of Lall Ded, who represented the acme of pre-Islamic spiritual heritage of Kashmir, Nund Rishi carried it ahead as a part of its Rishi order (as sufism in Kashmir was called). Islamic beliefs and practices enjoyed as much autonomy within wider Islamic tradition as pre-Islamic Kashmir did during Vedic and post-Vedic tradition of India. It "neither affected the independence of Kashmir nor, at first, materially change its cultural and political conditions."[12] Many scholars have noted pre-Islamic influences in Kashmiri Islam. Abdullah Yausuf Ali traces practice of relic worship -- as in hazratbal shrine where the Prophet's (PBUH) hair is preserved – to Buddhist influence.[13] Dr. Arthur Neve observes, "Kashmiri Muslim has transferred reverence from Hindu stones to Muslim Relics."[14] Similarly "Muslim saints are worshipped like Hindu gods and godlings."[15] Islam in sufi form thus came to Kashmir not as a destroyer of the tradition, as is the case in many other lands, but as its preserver, consolidator and perpetuator. The fact that Islam is rooted in Kashmiri tradition and the tradition is permeated with the Islamic spirit has enabled Kashmiris to reconcile cosmopotan affiliations with territorial nationalism. Kashmiri Muslim has remained a Kashmiri as well as a Muslim and rarely suffers from schizophrenic pangs which Islamic links and local patriotism often generate among Muslims elsewhere in India.

Kashmir has been a melting-pot of ideas and races. It received every new creed with discrimination and enriched it with its own contribution, without throwing away its earlier acquisitions. As Sufi observes, "the cult of Buddha, the teachings of Vedanta, the mysticism of Islam have one after an-

other found a congenial home in Kashmir."[16] He adds, "it has imbibed the best of Buddhism, the best of Hinduism and the best of Islam."[17] Similarly, on account of its cultural homogeneity and geographical compactness, all admixtures of races who emigrated to Kashmir from ancient times merged their identities into one whole. According to the renowned Kashmiri scholar and historian Mohammed Din Fauq, even the people who came from Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkistan as late as six and seven hundred years ago were so mixed with Kashmiri Muslims in culture, civilization and matrimonial relations that "all non-Kashmiri traces are completely absent from their life."[18]

Monumental Achievements

Kashmir was, at one period, "the clearing house of several civilizations and the influences of those are found in this natural retreat."[19] It had also made monumental contribution to Indian culture. Its position within India was similar to that of ancient Greece in European civilization. It has been one of the biggest seats of Indian culture and learning which, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "dominated the intellectual scene of the country for almost 2000 years." There is no branch of human knowledge to which ancient Kashmir did not make a pioneering and a substantial contribution. G.T. Vigne had hoped, "Kashmir will (again) become focus of Asiatic civilisation, a miniature England in the heart of Asia."[20]

Among political achievements of Kashmir, mention may be made of the conquest of Lalitaditya-Muktapdia (725-753 AD), whom the great Kashmiri historian Kalhana describes as "the universal monarch moving round the Earth like the Sun." According to Sufi, "he is the most conspicuous figure in Kashmir history. He raised this country to a pitch of glory it had never reached before." He, writes Mohibbul Hasan, "defeated the Arab forces led by Mohammed Bin Qasim's successor in Sindh Junaid and overran his territory."[21] He collected a galaxy of scholars from all over India in his Durbar. Kashmiris similarly hail another golden period of their history during the reign of the Muslim king Zain-ul-Abdin popularly called Bud Shah (the great king) from 1420 to 1470. It "con-

stituted a climax never attained by any other independent king in Kashmir"[22]. He invited artisans, craftsmen, scholars and men of letters from far-off foreign countries as a result of which Kashmir flourished materially and culturally. He laid lasting basis of a truly secular polity. In Rodger's words, "he was three hundred years ahead of England". According to Jonaraja "beauty dwelt in his person and the goddess of hearing on his lips, fortune rested in his breast, and patience in his mind." Kashmiris regard him as greater than Akbar. Sufi argues at length to prove the point. He quotes sir Wolsley Haig who says Zain-ul-Abdin "possessed a stock of learning and accomplishments from which Akbar was excluded, his views were more enlightened than the emperor's and he practised a tolerance which Akbar only preached." According to the greatest Kashmiri poet of modern age, Mehjur, Akbar learnt from him (Bud Sheh) the art of running the affairs of the state.

It was emperor Akbar who brought an end to indigenous Kashmiri Muslim rule that had lasted 250 years. After numerous Mughal attempts, which began with Babur and continued with Humayun and Mirza Haider Dughlat, Akbar succeeded in defeating the last Kashmiri king Yusuf Shah Chak, not only through armed superiority but also through imperial intrigues and due to internal betrayals.

The watershed in Kashmir history is not the beginning of the Muslim rule as is regarded in the rest of the subcontinent but the changeover from a Kashmiri rule to a non-Kashmiri rule.

Kashmir remained a part of Mughal empire for 106 years. It was indeed a glorious period of Indian history and Kashmir did make progress, in certain respects. But Kashmiris did not feel a sense of pride in the Mughal rule as they did in the Kashmiri rule, Muslim and Non-Muslim. There is a popular belief that it was the ban on army service imposed on Kashmiris by the Mughals that eventually demartialised a martial race. According to Lieutenant Newal, "it is possible that long series of acts of systematic tyranny and spirit-breaking oppression may have its effect in changing the character of this once brave and warlike race."

The Mughal rule over Kashmir ended when Ahmad Shah Durrani annexed it to the Afghan empire in 1752. A rule from Herat, Qandhar and Kabul proved far worse than the rule from Delhi and Agŕa. Sofi attributes the end of the rule of Afghans to their stupidity, greed and exactions. Their intolerance and extortion, he says, are still on the lips of those whose ancestors suffered at their hands. 67 years of Afghan rule were followed by 27 years of the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Ruler of Punjab and about 100 years of rule by a Dogra family of Jammu. From the Kashmiri point of view, the entire period, from 1586 to 1947, was that of an alien rule, whether the ruler was a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The organised modern political movement in Kashmir started in 1931 and culminated in the Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946. Though addressed to the last ruler Maharaja Hari Singh, its leaders traced it to the urge for identity and self-government which started in 1586.

The foregoing broad survey of an unusual combination of geographical, ethnic and political factors was bound to make people strongly conscious of their distinct identity. Neither the trend of Muslim consolidation which gradually demolished citadels of what were called nationalist Muslims elsewhere in the undivided country in the forties could undermine this identity nor emergence of Pakistan as a Muslim country, after the partition of the country, almost along communal lines, could become an irrestible attraction.

The role of the Congress party in supporting the struggle of Kashmiri people against a Hindu Maharaja, against the open condemnation of it by the Muslim League had also established a close ideological affinity between the two. Moreover, Gandhi and Nehru had asserted that the people, and not the ruler, had a right to decide which country - India or Pakistan - they would accede to whereas Pakistan leaders recognised "the soverign right of the princes" to take such a decision. The attempt by Pakistan to annex Kashmir through force, by supporting a tribal raid later supported by regulars of its army, further outraged a self-respecting community.

The decision of the popular leadership of Kashmir backed by overwhleming support of the people, to accede to India in 1947 was the only way left to it to protect its deeply cherished identity and the Kashmiri heritage acquired in the course of 5000 years through a genius of reconciling claims of continuity and change and assimilation of ideas, cultures and races.

Many of the expectations of the people of Kashmir were evidently not fulfilled. No doubt power returned to Kashmir-based leadership after almost four centuries. Monarchy (headed by a non-Kashmiri ruler) was abolished. Tillers became owners of the land (owned mostly by non-Kashmiri and non-Muslim landlords) without compensation. Economy made rapid strides with almost the highest per capita central aid and least per capita taxation of all the states of the country. But the Kashmiri nationalism which the Indian leadership had fostered to counter the religious appeal of Pakistan, created formidable problems of its adjustment with the claims of Indian nationalism and emerging regional identities of Jammu and Ladakh. New Delhi became as indifferent to the urge for identity and autonomy of Kashmir – on account of which it had rejected Pakistan--as Srinagar was indifferent to the similar urge of the other two regions.

Forced erosion of autonomy of the State, with the support of governments imposed through rigged elections, eroded the popular basis of Kashmir's accession to India. Denial of opportunity of self-government implied transfer of power from Kashmir to New Delhi. The first fair election of 1977 revived hopes in Kashmir. But the verdict of 1983 election was again dishonoured when the duly elected government of the National Conference headed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah was dismissed in 1984. He was reinstalled after two years when he agreed to share power with the Congress, the ruling party at the centre; thus humiliating himself and his people which led to a process of their alienation.

Pakistan got an opportunity to champion the cause of Kashmiri identity, threatened by India in popular perception, as India had championed it when it was threatened by Pakistan in 1947. Making the fullest use of the opportunity Paki-

stan helped to channelize alienation of Kashmiri Muslims into an armed militant movement and gave arms and training to Kashmiri youth demanding "azadi", apart from official "diplomatic, political and moral support" to the "azadi" movement. Indiscriminate and ruthless repression launched by the Indian security forces in January 1990 converted it into a mass insurgency.

However, Pakistan committed a graver error of judgement in appreciating urges of Kashmiri nationalism than Indian rulers had done. It was in a greater hurry to divert anti-India feelings in pro-Pak direction. It withdrew its support from "azadi" movement and transferred it to pro-Pak militant groups and categorically ruled out third option of independence of the State. This resulted in a clash between Kashmiri nationalists and Pakistan supporters and between Kashmiri Islam and the standardized version of Islam of Jamat-i-Islam. Indo-Pak conflict over Pakistan and a sort of proxy war on the soil of the Valley will not be resolved merely by the strength of their respective arms but by their capacity to win the battle for the mind of Kashmir shaped over in five millenia. Of course, the struggle for the assertion of their identities by other regions and ethnic group of the State will have a critical bearing on this battle.

Whatever be the factors that drove youth to desperation and resort to gun, the crucial question is how would it affect the character of one of the most civilized communities of the subcontinent? How would the gun cease to be the final arbiter of even internal disputes? If religious and political minorities remain threatened, what will happen to the spiritual and moral heritage of Kashmir? Will Kashmiriyat survive, if its split on religious lines, with the exodus of the bulk of its small but vital Kashmiri Pandit community, remains unrepaired; which used to make an intellectual input, out of proportion to its numbers to the spread of knowledge about the history and content of the Kashmiri tradition. If the community remains alienated, it will do as much damage to the soul of Kashmir as alienation of Kashmiri Muslims did to the soul of India.

Finally, Kashmiriyat needs, for its survival and growth, to build bridges of understanding with the neighbouring regional and ethnic identities of the State. It would then aspire to bridge India's relations with its vital Western neighbour Pakistan.

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